VOLUME TWO

معارف مصلح الأمت

The Statements and Lectures of Muslihul Ummat

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyulāh Sāhib

رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Allāhābād have had the honour of publishing several important books on the themes of reformation, Sufism, academic and religious works, and various biographies. Even at present, a few books covering different topics are either being composed or written. Some books have passed the stages of writing and are on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the honour of conveying these works to your hands as quickly as possible.

From among these books is the second volume of *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat* which we have the honour of presenting to you. This book essentially contains the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, and pearls and gems related to the Dīn as presented by H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* in his assemblies. It is a valuable treasure house of the sciences, mysteries and fine points of the Qur'ān and H̲adīth. These have been simplified and explained by my honourable father after immense toiling. In this way, he made them equally beneficial for the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – enable my father to complete this important work. Āmīn.

May Allāh *taʿālā* reward all the members of Idārah Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat who fulfilled their obligations with hard work and dedication.

Muh̲ammad ʿAbdullāh Qāmar az-Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī

FOREWORD

الحمد لله والواحد القهار، العزيز الغفار، مقدم الأقدار ومصرف الأمور على ما يشاء ويختار، ومكور الليل على النهار.

الواحد الأحد الفرد العليم الحكيم الذي أيقظ من خلقه من اصطفاه فأدخله في جملة الأخيار، ووفق من اختار من عبيده فجعله من الأبرار.

وبصر من أحبه من خلقه للحقائق، فزهدوا في هذا الدار فاجتهدوا في مرضاته والتأهب لدار القرار.

والصلوة والسلام على نبيه المصطفى المختار، وعلى اله الأطهار، وأصحابه الأخيار، والمهاجرين منهم والأنصار رضي الله عنهم.

Respected friends! This insignificant friend of yours presents volume two of *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat* to you which contains the statements and teachings of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Was̲īyullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*. As before, I had to toil quite a bit in the arrangement and editing of this work. This is because it is not easy to convert a speech to the written word as stated by Shaykh Ah̲mad Rūmī *rah̲imahullāh* the compiler of *Majālis al-Abrār*. He writes:

> Acting under the request of the honourable Muh̲ammad Rad̲ī ʿUthmānī S̲āh̲ib, the owner of Dār al-Ishāʿat Karachi, I commenced revising and renewing the book, *Majālis al-Abrār*. It is easy to make

> something new and to embellish it, but it is difficult to change and decorate something which is old and to put it in line with one's own preferences. I too had to bear many hardships in rearranging this book. A major reason for this is that the themes of the book were not arranged according to a set sequence. Instead, one topic and then another, and then a third topic are discussed without sequence as normally happens in a speech or lecture. The entire discussion may be most appropriate and concurring, but it is difficult to give it a specific theme or topic. Then you find certain themes repeated in different assemblies. While they were necessary in themselves, it becomes difficult for the person who is arranging the different themes. It is also hard to separate one point from another because the themes of each assembly are so strongly interconnected that it is difficult to correctly separate one from the other.

Thus, I had to toil extensively in compiling and arranging this collection. I did this so that it becomes easy for the Muslims in general and the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* in particular to derive benefit from this book.

Many readers expressed their approval and appreciation with respect to the first volume. This was especially the case with Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbdullāh Sāhib Kāpaudrī, a distinguished scholar and a man of action of Gujarat. He expressed his considerable approval and took several copies for his close associates in Canada.

Maulānā Sayyid Najm al-Hasan ibn Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* also expressed the benefit of this book.

The other most pleasing point is that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Wādih Sāhib Nadwī wrote a most eloquent and lengthy introduction which is most certainly a major academic gift for us. Hadrat Maulānā quoted the statements of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* which the latter made in his book *Purāne Chirāgh* about Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This is a source of much pride for us. I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to bless Hadrat Maulānā, his brother, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Rābi' Sāhib (the nāzim of Dār al-'Ulūm Nadwatul 'Ulamā', Lucknow) and the other family members with good health and wellness, and to inspire them to continue rendering religious and academic services. Āmīn.

I make du'ā' to Allāh *ta'ālā* to make this book beneficial to the ummat and to make it easy for us to complete the remaining volumes. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Muharram al-Harām 1438 A.H.
October 2016

INTRODUCTION

Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Wādih Rashīd Hasanī Nadwī Sāhib
(Academic Head at Nadwatul ʿUlamā', Lucknow)

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على سيد المرسلين، وخاتم النبيين، سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين، وبعد.

The work of propagation and rectification of the nation is a distinguished quality of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. It was this quality which resulted in such an august group coming into existence. Those who did not witness the prophetic era but served the Qur'ān and teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a manner which presented the entire system of Dīn and the Sharīʿat, and prepared such personalities from one generation to the next who had been separating from Dīn those influences which were causing a distancing from Dīn and the prophetic era.

The system of propagation and rectification in India was initiated by Hadrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Chishtī *rahimahullāh* (d. 632 A.H.). His lofty character and affection caused such a fragrant breeze to blow throughout India that people began entering the fold of Islam in droves. He established himself in Ajmer and seated his khalīfah, Hadrat Khwājah Bakhtiyār Kākī *rahimahullāh* (d. 633 A.H.) in Delhi. The two then quenched the thirst of those who were thirsty for īmān and Allāh's love to the extent that the flag of Islam began to flutter in India. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred their lineage with immense blessings and inclusiveness whereby India continued producing men who

combined knowledge, concern and spirituality in every subsequent era. It was by virtue of the following qualities of these men that they strengthened Islam and guaranteed its survival in a manner whose parallel can be found in the early eras of Islam. These qualities were: intensely strong īmān, pain and concern, sincerity and devotion, conviction and reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, high aspirations, valiant character, abstinence and independence, establishing the truth, speaking out the truth during the most challenging times, and refuting falsehood.

The latter era commences with the revivalist works of Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī Imām Sirhindī (d. 1034 A.H.). He combated atheism, apostasy and disbelief on a governmental level. Consequently, people witnessed the greatest defender of Dīn and Sharīʿat on a governmental level in the form of Sultan Muhīyy ad-Dīn Aurangzeb ʿĀlamgīrī *rahimahullāh* when he ascended the throne.

From the same lineage we see Hakīm al-Islam Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and his sons who served knowledge and Dīn. From their lineage there appeared Amīr al-Mu'minīn Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh* who prepared a group of followers who were like the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and revived all the departments of Dīn along the lines of the Khilāfat-e-Rāshidah. These people did their work through propagation and rectification, and then through jihād, and were successful in their objectives.

Through the concern and training of this group, such individuals were trained who educated people and carried out the work of rectification of the selves by getting involved in the fields of education and spiritual rectification. The following names are well known in

the field of education: Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Is-hāq, Shāh Muhammad Ya'qūb, Maulānā 'Abd al-Qayyūm Budhānwī, Maulānā Sa'ādat 'Alī Sahāranpūrī, Maulānā Ahmad 'Alī Sahāranpūrī, Miyā Nadhīr Husayn Muhaddith Dehlawī, Maulānā Mamlūk 'Alī Nānautwī, Maulānā 'Abd al-Ghanī Mujaddidī Muhājir Madanī, Maulānā Shāh Lutfullāh 'Alīgarhī. It is through them that great scholars like Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Nānautwī, Maulānā Ya'qūb Nānautwī, Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī, Maulānā Muhammad 'Alī Maungerī, Maulānā Shiblī Nu'mānī, Nawāb Siddīq Hasan Khān Bhopālī, and Maulānā Muhammad Mazhar Nānautwī were trained. From them, the following distinguished scholars came onto the scene: Maulānā Mahmūd Hasan Deobandī, Maulānā Khalīl Ahmad Sahāranpūrī, Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī, Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī, Maulānā 'Abd al-Hayy Hasanī, Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī and others.

The most important names in the field of spiritual rectification are those of Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Muhājir Makkī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh*. The same spiritual blessings were conferred in the eastern side of the country by Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Khwājah Ahmad Hasanī Nasīrābādī and after him, Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī.

Most of the above-mentioned personalities were affiliated to the family of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* and the group of Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*. However, the last two [Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Khwājah Ahmad Hasanī Nasīrābādī and Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī] were

genealogically and spiritually attached to Hadrat Sayyid Ahmad Shahīd *rahimahullāh*, and academically connected to the family of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī was the khalīfah of Hadrat Diyā' an-Nabī Hasanī (d. 1906) who was the maternal grandfather of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. His works in the fields of propagation and rectification were not confined to Rā'ī Bareilly and Nasīrābād. Rather, major strides in the propagation of knowledge were made in the eastern sections of the country like Jaunpūr, A'zamgarh, Ma'u, Benares and other areas. His rectificational works also extended to the family of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in the A'zamgarh area. This family benefited tremendously from the efforts of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Hasanī Nasīrābādī, and this has been constantly acknowledged by Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, his father and his family members.

Hadrat Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib Fatahpūrī Allāhābādī went to study in Deoband and benefited tremendously in the field of Hadīth from the distinguished Hadīth expert, 'Allāmah Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*. He then attached himself to Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and traversed the stations of Sufism under his tutelage. Subsequently, he became one of his distinguished and senior khulafā'. The qualities of knowledge and research, pain and love, attachment to Allāh *ta'ālā*, rectification and training, propagation and instruction were all combined in him. He took recourse to these qualities in his lectures, statements, Qur'ān and Hadīth

lessons, and written works; and thereby made major contributions. His assembly was a place which, more than the laity, was occupied by scholars. This then became a major means for the guidance of the laity.

Towards the latter part of his life he had to spend summer and winter in Mumbai for the sake of medical treatment. His stay resulted in major changes in the conditions of the people of Mumbai. Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes in this regard:

> Had Allāh *taʿālā* willed, and had Maulānā travelled to Mumbai for a few more years, the city, to a large extent, would have developed an Islamic awakening, reformed its ways, had an enthusiasm for emulating the Sunnah, and hundreds and thousands of lives would have changed for the better. But none can fathom Allāh's *taʿālā* wisdom and divine mysteries. This chain of goodness and blessings suddenly came to an end in November 1967 (Shaʿbān 1387). Not only Mumbai, but the whole of India and the Islamic world at large was orphaned from this blessed existence who had refreshed our memories about the Sufis and reformers of the past. This personality proved that sincerity, pain and concern can wield their authority and influence in the most unpleasant situations, and in the most materialistic eras and places. [A poet says]:

> A true lover of Allāh changed an entire world.[1]

The identity of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Fatahpūrī *rahimahullāh* (d. 1967) becomes clear from the above description of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*. He writes about one of his visits to Allāhābād and his meeting with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

> On this occasion I got the opportunity of observing him from close. He had a trembling and restless disposition. It seemed as though he had no rest for tomorrow. The conditions of the Muslims, the corruption of their character and dealings, a dearth of integrity and sincerity in them, and open hypocrisy in them caused him to become restless and disturbed. The yearning to rectify the situation and summon people to run towards Allāh *taʿālā* had overpowered his heart, mind and veins. His condition had become as described in the following couplet:
>
>> Sparks are emanating from every strand of my hair. There is a possibility of fire dripping from my veins.
>
> On seeing the Maulānā's restlessness and agitation, I spontaneously thought of Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He had the same lean

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[1] Maulānā Abūl Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*: *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1, p. 163.

appearance, informality in speech, independence when addressing someone, stuttering in speech like that of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, predominance of daʿwat, silence which is engrossed in thought, and the same quivering speech. Although there was a definite difference in them on the subject of daʿwat, he was the same as Hadrat Maulānā Ilyās Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his love for Allāh *taʿālā* and concern for his responsibilities. I had the opportunity of attending his morning and evening assemblies. There was a captivating feeling, while at the same time, an absolute balance between the intellect and Sufism. He would occasionally hold some of his devoted attendants by their heads and shake them, and direct their attention towards an important and necessary point.

In his assemblies of Allāhābād, Maulānā focussed mainly on reminding about the Hereafter, encouraging towards the pleasures of Paradise, and warning against the torments of the Hell-fire. This Qur'ānic style of admonition is the most beneficial and has the greatest impact. More so when we consider the fact that the ʿulamā' and admonishers have completely disregarded the themes of the Hereafter, Paradise and Hell. They feel ashamed to speak about

these things as though it is unfashionable to mention them. [1]

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* writes further about one of his meetings with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* on his journey to Mumbai in 1967. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away not long after that:

> When I was going to the Hijāz in 1967, I stayed over in Mumbai for a few days. One morning, I went to Kurlā – where Maulānā was staying – and reached at the exact time when he was commencing his morning class. I was given a place near Maulānā's chair. Maulānā appeared, a microphone was placed in front of him, and he began speaking. In the midst of his talk, he asked for some books of tafsīr and Hadīth, read a few texts and continued his speech. I remained attached to the leg of the chair. I was already accustomed to Maulānā's tone and manner of speech, but I could not understand a considerable amount of what he said. Yet I saw a deep effect on the faces and eyes of those who were present. Like many occasions before, I realized that for a person to have an effect on his audience, oratory skills and words are not necessary. [As a saying goes]:
>
> > "The beloveds have many ways for which there are no names and words."

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[1] Maulānā Abūl Hasan ʿAlī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*: *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1, p. 157.

> After all, many powerful and eloquent orators deliver speeches and lectures, but they neither have any effect on the hearts nor do they bring about any change in the lives. As Jigar [a poet] said:
>
> > "There is no joy of love in the eyes, and
> > no light of conviction on the face."

There was a need to present the statements, articles and teachings of Hadrat in a clearer manner. After all, if it was difficult for the scholars to understand them, it would certainly not be easy for the laity. The one who could have been most eligible to fulfil this need could only be the one who had the honour of studying directly under him, of being in his service and of remaining in his company. Furthermore, he must also have had enjoyed the confidence of Hadrat. Subsequently, it was his own student, son-in-law and a reformer of this era – Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib – who undertook this responsibility. Hadrat Maulānā's series *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* are still continuing. Several volumes and editions have already been published. It has also been translated into English and is widely appreciated by the 'ulamā' and laity. Hadrat Maulānā himself has a deep knowledge of Sufism. In his assemblies he quotes the statements of the reformers, Sufi masters and Allāh-conscious 'ulamā'. These are of immense benefit to his audiences and to those who read his books.

He collated a work of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* titled *Tahārat-e-Qalb*. The themes of this book are read in some spiritual training centres. They are also read during the month of Ramadān in the assemblies of our hometown, Takiyah, Rā'ī Bareilly. Scholars and masses of other areas are also benefiting from this book. Hadrat Maulānā is engaged in other

scholarly and academic works as well. In addition to referring to the books of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, he makes reference to the latter's assemblies and statements which have been published in *Maʿrifat-e-Haq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. The book under review, *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*, is an important link in this chain. The first volume has already been published and more work in this regard is still being done.

Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib is undoubtedly rendering sterling and effective services in the field of conveying the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and his khulafā'. I had the good fortune of attending his assemblies. I used to meet Hadrat Maulānā whenever I had the honour of visiting and meeting Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* in Allāhābād. Hadrat Maulānā is also one of his senior khulafā'. His teachings and blessings are not confined to this country alone. Rather, they extend to distant regions and foreign countries as well. He has a deep and respectful relationship with my elder brother, Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Rābiʿ Hasanī Nadwī *dāmat barakātuhum* and is also a member of the administrative board of Nadwatul ʿUlamā'. He is particular about attending its annual meetings. In this way, I have many opportunities of meeting him and benefiting from him.

Hadrat Maulānā has honoured me by including me in this written work in which he endeavoured to present the teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which portray his balanced views, rectification system, and the complete religion of Islam to the Muslims. He also successfully tried to explain

and simplify the sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for the benefit of the laity. A special feature of his sciences is that he presents his points in the light of the Qur'ān, Hadīth, and the statements of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* and erudite 'ulamā'. In addition to explaining and simplifying them, Hadrat Maulānā has brief annotations.

Hadrat Maulānā personally read some extracts of this book to me, and then sent me a copy of the entire book for me to study. The teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which have been simplified and explained by a close associate and distinguished scholar do not need an introduction or review. I wrote these few lines after considering it to be an honour and good fortune. May Allāh *ta'ālā* accept.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* combined this world with the Hereafter. After combining the two, he encouraged towards gaining proximity with Allāh *ta'ālā* through his lectures, statements, writings and articles. The difference is that the world must not be made an objective. Rather, it must be used to reach the objective. I quote a paragraph from this very book:

> This world is certainly not disparaged. In other words, as regards the disparagement of the world mentioned in the texts, we have to understand that it has been mentioned out of necessity so that people do not make this world the objective, and their engrossment with it does not cause them to forget the Hereafter. Apart from this reason, this world is an excellent home for a person.

He explains this point further on:

It is only in this world that a believer gets proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, īmān, good deeds. This is why the world cannot be entirely disparaged.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was from among those 'ulamā' to whom the following verse of the Qur'ān applies:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

It is solely the ʿulamā' who fear Allāh.

And who are seen to be manifestations of the following prediction of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله، ينفون تحريف الغالين، وانتحال المبطلين، وتأويل الجاهلين.

The bearers of this knowledge will be the just and equitable ones from every generation. They are the ones who will protect it against the misinterpretation of extremists, keep it pure from the deviated ones, and preserve it from the incorrect interpretations of the ignoramuses.

I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* that this book will prove to be an aid in understanding and presenting Islam correctly, and people will get help from it for leading correct Islamic lives. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* and He alone guides to the correct path.

Muhammad Wādih Rāshīd Hasanī Nadwī
Academic Head, Nadwatul 'Ulamā', Lucknow
18 Dhū al-Qaʿdah 1437 A.H.

REFLECTING AND PONDERING OVER THE QUR'ĀN

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ. بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ. لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَّاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ. اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Those who did good in this world, for them is goodness. The earth of Allāh is vast. It is only the patient ones who receive their reward without measure.[1]

We learn from the above that the righteous believers are rewarded in this world as well. I heard this on many occasions from our seniors. They used to say that those who did good, there is goodness for them in this world as well. The word *h̲asanah* (goodness) in this context refers to good health and wellbeing. We do not know the nature and extent of favours and bounties which Allāh *taʿālā* has in store for them.

It is only in this world that we get īmān and good deeds. Do you think these are insignificant and trivial treasures!? Furthermore, whatever favours and bounties we receive in Paradise will be recompenses for these worldly treasures. After all, the Hereafter is the abode of recompense. This is why a believer will receive the full reward and recompense for his good

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[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 10.

deeds in the Hereafter. However, he will get a little as a sample in this world.

In-between the two parts of this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* says: "The earth of Allāh is vast." The author of *Rū<u>h</u> al-Maʿānī* explains this parenthetical clause. He says that it is brought to remove uncertainty because Allāh *taʿālā* first says that there is goodness (good health and wellness) for the doers of good in this world. No one should harbour the misgiving that many of the righteous people in this world experience a condition which is contradictory to this. In other words, they do not enjoy good health, etc. despite being righteous and pious. So the answer is given that sometimes the reason is the non-conduciveness of the weather and environment. Or it could be some other similar reason which causes physical ailments. We therefore have to understand in this regard that "The earth of Allāh is vast." Thus, there will certainly be some part or region of the world where the weather and environment will be conducive. A person should therefore go there for the sake of his health and wellness.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَفِي الْاَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَّجَنّٰتٌ مِّنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّزَرْعٌ وَّنَخِيْلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَّغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُّسْقٰى بِمَآءٍ وَّاحِدٍ قف وَنُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلٰى بَعْضٍ فِي الْاُكُلِ ط اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ.

In the land are different plots, adjacent to each other. And there are vineyards, fields, date-palms growing in clusters and un-clustered, watered with the same

water. It is We who make one excel over the other in the fruit. In these are signs for those who reflect.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to such a large and vast land as "different plots", and He placed different and special effects in each plot so that people of different temperaments may live their lives with sound health and wellness. The Being who is described in such a manner ought to be thanked so that man can be included among the righteous.

I showed this tafsīr to the people and said to them: "I am not saying this. Rather, it is a very senior scholar of the Qur'ān who is saying it." That is, if the weather and other conditions in a place are not conducive to a person, he must emigrate to a place where he can enjoy good health and live a full life. Once he does this and experiences sound health and wellness, he must express his gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* and he will then be included among the righteous.

I constantly show this tafsīr to the people and say to them: "This is a very senior scholar who is saying this. You should now pay heed." This verse shows that a believer receives goodness in this world as well. Another explanation is that it refers to sustenance. If a believer is to receive Paradise and its bounties, then it is not far-fetched for him to receive sustenance in this world.

I quoted the Hadīth to you in which Allāh *taʿālā* announces in the latter part of the night: "Is there anyone seeking forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone seeking wellness and sustenance that I may confer these to him?"

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 4.

When the Ahlullāh hear this announcement, they go into a special trance-like condition. Normal people do not feel this at all. Just look at Allāh's grace! We will need sustenance in the morning, yet He is making arrangements for it from the night. Similarly, because we need good health and wellness in this world, Allāh *taʿālā* created different environments and weather patterns for different regions of this world. In this way, He made arrangements for man's physical protection.

The land is divided into pieces of plots which, despite being next to each other, have different effects. This is a most unique phenomenon. There are vineyards, various orchards, and date-palms. Some of them are such that two trunks develop from one trunk. Others do not have two trunks. Despite this, they are all irrigated with one type of water. Some fruits surpass others. This means that their shape, size, fragrance and taste are different; but they have been irrigated by the same water. Glory to Allāh! Look at the magnificent power of Allāh *taʿālā*! Plots of land are lying next to each other as though they are one and the water too is the same. Despite this, various types of fruits are produced from it. In this there is proof that there is certainly a Creator who is all-wise, all-powerful and a great planner who cannot be subdued by anyone.

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* enables us to traverse the earth by speaking about the various plots of land and their different qualities. Some plots of land have fertile soil which are cultivable. Other plots have soil which is brackish. Some plots are soft while others are hard. Agriculture can be practised on some plots of land but fruit orchards cannot be established there. Others are of an opposite nature. The purpose of all this is to demonstrate that although plots of land are lying next

to each other, their components are of various qualities. In the same way, the weather conditions of each plot are different from the other. If a person does not experience good health in one place, he may go to another place. The land of Allāh *taʿālā* is vast.

Allāh *taʿālā* enabled us to traverse the heavens as He did with the earth. Allāh *taʿālā* also took us on a tour of our own bodies. He says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ۗ ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with meat, then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

Glory to Allāh! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* introduced man to his own self. And through it, He introduced man to Himself. After all, if He took us on a tour of our own bodies, why should He deprive us from His recognition?

I accompanied a few people to the house of a certain person. The owner of the house had decorated his house with flowers and creepers. The next day he requested me to deliver a lecture. I read the following verse:

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 12-14.

اَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ اَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَّفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَآءِ. تُؤْتِيْ اُكُلَهَا كُلَّ حِيْنٍۭ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهَا ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ. وَمَثَلُ كَلِمَةٍ خَبِيْثَةٍ كَشَجَرَةٍ خَبِيْثَةِ ۨاجْتُثَّتْ مِنْ فَوْقِ الْاَرْضِ مَا لَهَا مِنْ قَرَارٍ. يُثَبِّتُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَيُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۙ وَيَفْعَلُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ.

Have you not seen how Allāh set forth a parable? A good word like a good tree whose root is firmly established and whose branches are in the sky. It produces its fruit in every season by the order of its Lord. Allāh sets forth the parables for the people so that they may reflect. The parable of a foul word is like that of a foul tree uprooted from the surface of the earth, having no permanence whatsoever. Allāh strengthens the believers with the firm word in the life of this world and in the Hereafter. Allāh leads astray the wrongdoers. Allāh does as He wills.[1]

When I explained these verses, the people said to me that I spoke in line with the condition of the owner of the house. I said to them: "You can assume as you like. In these verses Allāh *taʿālā* compare a good word to a good tree whose roots are firm in the ground and branches are so high in the sky as though they are conversing with the heavens. In other words, this is the nature of a good word. Its roots are firmly embedded in the heart of a believer, and whatever emanates from him – i.e. by virtue of his īmān – they are numerous.

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[1] Sūrah Ibrāhīm, 14: 24-27.

We learn from this that the actions of a believer which are accepted and reach Allāh *taʿālā* are like this because they are the fruits of īmān. The roots of that īmān are in the heart. A narration of *Sahīh Bukhārī* states:

عن رفاعة بن رافع قال كنا نصلي وراء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فلما رفع رأسه من الركعة قال سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ، فقال رجل ورائه: رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيْهِ. فلما انصرف قال من المتكلم انفا. قال أنا. قال رأيت بضعة وثلاثين ملكا يبتدرونها أيهم يكتبها أولا.[1]

Hadrat Rifāʿah ibn Rāfiʿ radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: We were performing salāh behind Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. When he raised his head from the rukūʿ, he said: سَمِعَ اللهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ*. A person behind him said:* رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ حَمْدًا كَثِيْرًا طَيِّبًا مُبَارَكًا فِيْهِ*. When Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam completed his salāh and turned around, he asked: "Who said these words just now?" The man said: "It was me." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I saw over 30 angels rushing and trying to outdo each other in an effort to record what you said."*

These words of the man were accepted in Allāh's court because they emanated from a heart which was filled with sincerity. This is why they reached the heavens immediately.

[1] رواه البخاري. معارف الحديث، ج ٣، ص ٢٨٥.

The good word referred to in the verse is described as a tree which bears fruit in every season. In other words, on account of it, a believer is inspired to do good deeds at every moment. This world is the world of action while the Hereafter is the world of recompense. Whatever a believer receives in the Hereafter will be the fruit of his actions of this world. Thus, the fruits of īmān with relation to the Hereafter are referred to as *ukul* (in the above verse). This word is used to refer to food items. When a believer says *Sub-hānallāh, al-Hamdulillāh*, etc. in this world, they will be presented as fruit-bearing trees to him in the Hereafter. In other words, it will be said to him: You had said *Sub-hānallāh* at such and such time, now this is its tree. You had said *al-Hamdulillāh* at such and such time, and this is its tree." In addition to this, a believer will receive many other bounties of Paradise by virtue of his īmān and good actions. Allāh *taʿālā* describes some of the bounties of Paradise as follows:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ط تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ط اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ط تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا صلى وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ.

The description of Paradise which the righteous are promised: Rivers flow beneath it, its fruit is eternal, and so is its shade. This is the recompense for those who fear. And the retribution for the rejecters is the fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* goes into detailed descriptions of Paradise and its bounties just as He described Himself in detail in the Qur'ān. In the above verse Allāh *taʿālā* says that the fruits of Paradise will be eternal. The ʿulamā' explain this by saying that when a person breaks off a

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 35.

fruit from a tree, Allāh *taʿālā* will immediately place another fruit in its place. However, some mashā'ikh say that the fruit will not move from its place because this negates the quality of being "eternal". Therefore, that very fruit will remain in its place while the person is eating of it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most astonishing point which the people of this ephemeral world cannot fathom. Imagine a person is eating a fruit and while he is eating it, that same fruit is growing on the tree. (compiler)

People constantly ask me to teach them wazīfahs. I say to them: "Read the verses of the Qur'ān which describe Paradise, there are no better wazīfahs." There was a man in Thānah Bhawan who used to lead us in salāh. I used to thoroughly enjoy it when he used to read this verse (quoted above). On one occasion we went to see a fort. We noticed streams of water flowing beneath the walls of the fort. I said: "These people have copied Paradise because Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to Paradise:

تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ

Rivers flow beneath it.

Allāh *taʿālā* went into much detail in describing Paradise. The 'ulamā' say that Allāh *taʿālā* described it in such a manner that He made us fall in love with it. Allāh *taʿālā* described Himself and made us fall in love with Him. In the same way, He described the bounties of Paradise and caused us to fall in love with it.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with the treasure of His love and His recognition.

I was explaining to you that the source of “a good word” is in the heart of a believer, while its branches – i.e. good deeds – emanate from his different body parts. Since the Hereafter is the place of recompense, he will receive the recompense for his good deeds in the Hereafter. However, this world is the only place for actions and deeds. The progress of a believer is therefore confined to this world only. Whatever progress a person wants to make in this regard, he will have to do it in this world. The Hereafter is not the place for it. The Hereafter is for recompense and nothing else. If we look at the world from this angle, we can say that it is worthy of praise. It is also for this reason that a long life is desirable. A narration states:

عن أبي بكرة أن رجلا قال: يا رسول الله أي الناس خير؟ قال: من طال عمره وحسن عمله. قال: فأي الناس شر؟ قال: من طال عمره وساء عمله.[1]

Abu Bakrah raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that a man said: “O Rasūlullāh! Who is the best among people?” He replied: “The one who has a long life coupled with good deeds.” The man asked: “Who is the worst of people?” He replied: “The one who has a long life but his actions are evil.”

The insignificance of this world

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] باب استحباب المال والعمر بالطاعة، مشكوة، ج ٢، ص ٤٥٠.

أَرَضِيْتُمْ بِالْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ.

Are you pleased with the life of this world forsaking the Hereafter? The enjoyment of the worldly life is but little compared to the Hereafter.[1]

In his commentary to the above verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* quotes the following Hadīth:

عن المستورد بن شداد قال سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول والله ما الدنيا في الآخرة إلا مثل ما يجعل أحدكم أصبعه في اليم، فلينظر بم يرجع.[2]

…Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: By Allāh! This world in comparison to the Hereafter is no more than the amount of moisture which comes onto the finger of one of you after he dipped it in the ocean. (There is no comparison between the water on a person's finger and the vast amount of water of an ocean).

The author quotes another narration in this regard. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by the place called Dhul Hulayfah and saw a goat stumbling and falling – on the verge of dying. He said to the Sahābah: "Just look at how valueless this goat is to its owner!" The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* said: "Most certainly." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I take an oath in the name of the Being in

[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 38.

[2] رواه مسلم. مشكوة، كتاب الرقاق، ج ٢، ص ٤٣٩.

whose control is my life. This world is far more valueless and worthless in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* than this goat is to its owner. Had the value of this world been equal to the wing of a mosquito in Allāh's sight, He would not have given even a single sip of water to an unbeliever."[1]

This world is not entirely disparaged

After quoting these narrations, the author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* writes:

ولا أرى الاستدلال على رداءة الدنيا إلا استدلالا في مقام الضرورة، نعم هي نعمة الدار لمن تزود منها لآخرته.

The disparagement of this world as mentioned in the texts must be understood out of necessity so that people do not make this world the objective and their engrossment with it does not become a cause of forgetting the Hereafter. Apart from this reason, this world is an excellent home for a person who takes provisions for it for the Hereafter.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *rah̲imahullāh* writes in *al-Muwāfaqāt*:

فذم الدنيا إنما هو لأجل أنها تصير ذريعة إلى تعطيل التكاليف. (الموافقات)

The only reason for disparaging this world is that it becomes a means of disregarding the impositions of the Sharīʿat. (impositions such as s̲alāh, zakāh, dhikr, Qur'ān recitation, etc.).

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[1] الجامع الصغير، بحوالة ترمذي، حديث ٧٤٨٠.

This is what the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* is saying. That is, this world is disparaged only out of necessity. Apart from this, it is an excellent abode for the person who uses it as a place to prepare his provisions for the Hereafter. When looked at from this angle, the world is not eligible for disparagement. Rather, it is worthy of praise.

I explained this theme to the people and said to them: "Look, such a senior scholar is saying this. It is only in this world that a believer gets proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, īmān, good deeds. This is why the world cannot be entirely disparaged."

It is related in a Hadīth that after a Sahābī passed away, Allāh *taʿālā* asked him: "What do you want? If you have any wish, then express it." He said: "O Allāh! I have no wish apart from the wish of returning to the world so that I may be martyred in Your cause again, and be presented before You again in the same bloody and injured state as I presented myself before You." Allāh *taʿālā* said: "This cannot happen."

We learn from this that a believer will have the desire to do good deeds in this world because the Hereafter is not the place for good deeds. It is only this world which is the place for actions.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* related this incident to the son of this Sahābī and informed him of this conversation between his father and Allāh *taʿālā*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* added: "Allāh *taʿālā* informed me of it because when your father learnt that he cannot return to this world, he said to

Allāh *taʿālā*: 'Very well. Inform the people of my condition.' And this has been done now."[1]

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī *rahimahullāh* was a very senior saint. When it was his final moments in this world, he expressed the following:

> Jāmī is not satisfied with this two-day life.
> If only I could be blessed with eternal life.

Bearing in mind that we receive īmān and the inspiration to do good deeds in this world, the seniors gave preference to living in this world and expressed the desire for long lives. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was asked, who is the best of people, he replied:

من طال عمره وحسن عمله

The one who has a long life coupled with good deeds.

A person asked me about hoping for death. I said to him that it is not permissible to hope for death after being distressed by worldly miseries and hardships. Yes, a person can hope for it out of love for Allāh *taʿālā* and a desire to meet Him. I then opened *Tafsīr Mazharī* and showed him that it is those who are overcome by ecstasy who express the desire for death. On the other hand, the spiritual masters of every era have always given preference to living and having long lives.

This is because they have understood that:

الدنيا مزرعة الآخرة

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، كتاب الجهاد، ص ٣٣٠.

This world is the tilling ground for the Hereafter.

Recognition of the self is a bounty

I say, if this is the case, then value the life of this world. Since you have come into this world, bring īmān and do good deeds. The greatest bounty for a believer in this world is the ability to recognize his self. He must examine himself and take care of his self.

من عرف نفسه عرف ربّه

The one who recognizes his self has in fact recognized his Lord.

Allāh *taʿālā* has placed proofs of His recognition within man. He says in this regard:

وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ

Don't you look within your own selves!?

The ʿulamā' have many explanations to the above verse. However, I say to you that you must read what Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard and understand it. He says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ۚ ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ۗ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, then We brought him forth

in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about our own selves, and He made it a means to recognize Him. We must therefore acquire His recognition. Ponder and reflect over these verses; there are no differences of opinion about them. Ponder over your birth, understand the translation of these verses, ponder over their objective, and practise on them. These are enough to acquire Allāh's pleasure.

Allāh *taʿālā* teaches us about Him in another way:

اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ رَفَعَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۗ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ يُدَبِّرُ الْاَمْرَ يُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ بِلِقَآءِ رَبِّكُمْ تُوْقِنُوْنَ.

Allāh is He who raised the heavens without any supports that you can see. He then established Himself on the throne. He subjected the sun and the moon [to run their course]. Each one runs its course at an appointed time. He regulates all matters. He expounds the signs, perhaps you may be convinced with the meeting of your Lord.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* is that Being who raised the skies without any pillars. You can see the skies high above you. He then established Himself on the throne which can be likened to a royal throne. He established Himself on it in a manner which is in line with His greatness. He caused the sun and moon to fulfil their tasks. Each

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 12-14.

[2] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 2.

one is moving in its own orbit and will continue until an appointed time. The sun completes its circuit in one year, while the moon does it in a month. Allāh *taʿālā* supervises everything that takes place in this universe. He clearly expounds His conceptual and legislative proofs so that you may be convinced about your resurrection before your Lord. If Allāh *taʿālā* can create such massive creations, why will He not have the power to bring the dead back to life? Conviction in this is on the basis that the true informer [Allāh *taʿālā*] informed us of the occurrence of a thing so it will most definitely take place.

Allāh *taʿālā* explains another proof of His Oneness. After speaking about raising the heavens, He speaks about spreading out the earth. He says:

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَدَّ الْاَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَاَنْهٰرًا ؕ وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرٰتِ جَعَلَ فِيْهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشِي الَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَآيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ.

It is He who spread out the earth and placed mountains and rivers therein. Of every fruit, He placed therein pairs of two types. He covers the day with the night. In this are signs for those who contemplate.[1]

A point of Allāh-recognition

There was a saint who had a dark complexion. The king summoned him to his court. When the kings eyes fell on him, the king began laughing. The saint realized that the king was laughing after seeing his dark complexion and dishevelled condition. He said to the king: "Respected king! What are you laughing at? Are you laughing at the pot or the potter?" He then

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 3.

quoted a couplet the essence of which is that whether a person is white or black – both are created by Allāh *taʿālā*. It is He who made the night dark and the day bright. Therefore no one can make any objections.

The saint was a spiritual master, so he gave an explanation which was filled with Allāh-recognition. This had an effect on the king. He got up from his throne and fell at the feet of the saint. Despite this, the saint said to his attendants: "Come, let's go. We will not remain here." He left the court angrily. However, bearing in mind that he was a spiritual master, he left his mark of Allāh-recognition on the king and all the courtiers.

I say to you that the greatest asset of a believer in this world is the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. Acquire it and be hasty in acquiring it. If you delay, you will harm your own self. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* created us for the acquisition of His recognition.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ. اَلَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَّالسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً ص وَّأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ج فَلَا تَجْعَلُوْا لِلّٰهِ أَنْدَادًا وَّأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ.

O mankind! Worship your Lord who created you and those before you so that you may become pious. He (who) has made for you the earth a carpet and the sky a canopy and sent down water from the sky. He brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. So

do not set up anyone as a rival to Allāh, while you know.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* first described the condition of believers, then unbelievers and finally the hypocrites. After describing the condition of these three groups separately, He made a general address to everyone by saying: "O mankind! Worship your Lord." He asks all groups to worship Him and recognize Him. Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about His recognition. How can it be possible for Allāh *taʿālā* to reveal the Qur'ān and not speak about Himself in it!? The Ahlullāh acquired the most recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* from the Qur'ān itself. It is that same Qur'ān which powerful mountains could not bear, but the heart of man was given the power to bear.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَاَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ.

Had We revealed this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* says elsewhere:

اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا وَاَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا جَهُوْلًا.

We offered the trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and they were

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 21-22.

[2] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

afraid of it. Man undertook to bear it; he is very merciless, immature.[1]

Look! The thing which the heavens, earth and mountains could not bear was given to man to bear. This certainly does not mean that you must become totally numb and insensitive to the extent that you are not affected by it. H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was a very beloved Prophet to Allāh *taʿālā*. He requested on one occasion: "O Allāh! Show Yourself to me." Allāh *taʿālā* did not refuse. Instead, He said: "Very well, look at the mountain." Allāh *taʿālā* caused all the animals and birds in that area to move away because they would not be able to bear His appearance. They would all be reduced to ash.

When Allāh *taʿālā* manifested Himself on the mountain, the mountain disintegrated and H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* fell unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he recalled the joy of Allāh's manifestation and conversation with Him. Subsequently, he did not enjoy looking at anyone nor listening to anyone's voice.

I am saying to you that too many days have passed. Hold on to the Qur'ān and see how quickly and easily you will traverse the path. When a believer establishes a bond with the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān establishes a bond with him. After that, just one verse grasps him and conveys him beyond what he can ever imagine.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلَمْ يَكُ نُطْفَةً مِّنْ مَّنِيٍّ يُّمْنٰى. ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى. فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الزَّوْجَيْنِ الذَّكَرَ وَالْاُنْثٰى. اَلَيْسَ ذٰلِكَ بِقَادِرٍ عَلٰى اَنْ يُّحْيِيَ الْمَوْتٰى.

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[1] Sūrah al-Ah̲zāb, 33: 72.

Was he not a mere drop of sperm that had been spilt? Then he was a clot of blood. Then He created him and moulded him in proportion. Then He made of him a pair: the male and the female. What! Is He unable to bring the dead back to life?[1]

There was a man who was reading the Qur'ān in the masjid of Thānah Bhawan. He held onto just one verse of the Qur'ān, and came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* where he was sitting. He came and said:

خُذْ يَا شَيْخ

Take this, O shaykh!

He said this although he did not know Arabic. He was overcome by a spiritual ecstasy. Hadrat took the Qur'ān from his hands, asked for water, read something and blew into it, and gave it to the man to drink. When the man calmed down, Hadrat asked him: "What happened?" He replied: "This verse grasped me, due to which I could not read further."

All the progress of a believer is from this Qur'ān. The rank which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* received was due to the Qur'ān. If you choose any other path, you will not find anything. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

They are the ones who are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the truly successful ones.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qiyāmah, 75: 37-40.

Guidance is confined to the Qur’ān. Being on guidance is a cause of peace and tranquillity in this world.

We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to confer us with complete guidance and to bless us with rectitude and success. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE SPEECH OF ALLĀH

The famous poet, Akbar Husayn Allāhābādī, said the following couplet:

> There are only two reasons for the popularity of Allāhābād. One is because of its guavas and the other is Akbar Husayn.

What he is trying to say is that the actual reason why Allāhābād is so well-known is the high quality guavas which grow there. Allāhābād became popular by the way. Similarly, the writing of Akbar became popular. Thereafter, Akbar became well-known and then Allāhābād.

I say that the original reason for the popularity of Allāhābād is just one because the spiritual masters do not consider guavas to be of real worth nor do they hold any noteworthy importance. Yes, the wise writings of Akbar Husayn Allāhābādī are most certainly valued by people who have a taste for such writings. This is why people turned their attention to his writings and embraced them. When Akbar Husayn saw this, he was overjoyed and compiled this couplet as a way of displaying his pride. He says that there is nothing apart from Akbar in Allāhābād. This couplet is also said as a way of displaying his favour in the sense that the honour and popularity enjoyed by Allāhābād is because of him.

If a poet can say about himself that there is nothing apart from him in Allāhābād, then why can Allāh *taʿālā* not say with regard to His speech that there is no speech like His among the creation? Can anyone say that Allāh *taʿālā* is wrong in making such a claim?

When a poet wants to draw attention towards his compilation and people turn to it, he is overjoyed. An author is overjoyed when he sees people showing an interest in his written work. Do you think Allāh *taʿālā* will not be happy when He sees people turning their attention towards His Book? He most certainly does and most certainly will.

Unfortunately, the creation today is only worried about its own things. People publish their own books and promote them by turning the attention of people towards them. Attention to the Qur'ān has been severed and it has been cast aside.

I have personally seen and heard on numerous occasions of a lecturer speaking for several hours on the Qur'ān and Hadīth but the masses are not impressed in the least. But when poems are quoted, then everyone expresses his approval and goes into an ecstasy. I ask you, will Allāh *taʿālā* not be displeased when He sees people not being impressed by His speech while they are so entranced by the speech of the creation!? Is this not a sign of weak īmān? The fact of the matter is that people nowadays have become accustomed to the pleasures of the carnal self. They desire carnal pleasure in their sleep and food, so now they want carnal pleasure in everything else. They find lectures and words of advice to be very bland. But when un-bearded young boys sing in melodious tones, they thoroughly enjoy it. When the 'ulamā' saw the inclination of the public, they too adopted this approach and are smug with it. They abandoned lectures on the Qur'ān and Hadīth, and reduced themselves to quoting poetry. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* says:

We did not teach him poetry nor does it behove him.[1]

The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

(وما علمناه) بتعليم الكتاب المشتمل على هذا البيان والتلخيص في أمر المبدأ والمعاد (الشعر) إذ لا يخفى على من به أدنى مسكة أن هذا الكتاب الحكيم المتضمن لجميع المنافع الدينية والدنيوية على أسلوب أفحم كل منطق يباين الشعر ولا مثل الثريا للثرى.

We did not teach him poetry because We taught him a Book which contains this explanation (mentioned above) and which comprises the gist of the beginning and end [of the creation]. the person who has the slightest affinity will realize that this wise Book contains all religious and worldly benefits expressed in a most eloquent manner which silences the greatest of speakers. It is the total opposite of poetry. There can be no comparison between the Thurayyā (Pleiades) and what lies beneath the soil.

أما لفظا فلعدم وزنه وتقفيته. وأما معنًا فلأن الشعر تخيلاتٌ مرغبة ومُنَفِّرَةٌ أو نحو ذلك، وهو مقر الأكاذيب ولهذا قيل أعذبه أكذبه والقرآن حكم وعقائد وشرائع. هذا رد لما كانوا يقولونه من أن القرآن شعر والنبي عليه السلام شاعر وغرضهم من ذلك أن ما جاء به عليه السلام من القرآن افتراء وتخيل وحاشاه ثم حاشاه من ذلك.

The Qur'ān is not like poetry because the [poetic] scales of the Qur'ān are not like those of poetry. It is also not

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

like poetry as regards its meanings because poetry by and large contains imageries which either create desire or dislike, or other similar sentiments. Furthermore, poetry is the place where lies and falsehood are to be found. This is why it is said that the more falsehood poetry contains, the sweeter it is. On the other hand, the Qur'ān contains wisdoms, beliefs and rules and regulations. (How, then, can there be any similarity between the two)? This verse is a refutation of those who claim that the Qur'ān is poetry and that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam is a poet. The objective in saying this was to show that the Qur'ān which Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam brought is a fabrication and imagery, whereas the Qur'ān is completely and totally pure from such accusations.

(وما ينبغي له) أي لا يليق ولا يصلح له صلى الله عليه وسلم الشعر لأنه يدعو إلى تغيير المعنى لمراعاة اللفظ والوزن ولأن أحسنه المبالغة والمجازفة والإغراق في الوصف، وأكثره تحسين ما ليس بحسن وتقبيح ما ليس بقبيح، وكل ذلك يستدعي الكذب أو يحاكيه الكذب وجلَّ جناب الشارع عن ذلك.[1]

The words "it does not behove him" mean that poetry is not suited to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam because poetry requires changes in meaning in order to give consideration to the words and scales. Another reason is that only that poetry is considered to be good which contains many hyperboles, imageries, and in-depth descriptions. Most poetry beautifies that which is not beautiful, and makes ugly what is not ugly. All this

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ١٢، ص ٤٦.

requires untruths or whatever is similar to untruths. And Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam is far beyond all this.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said a few lines of poetry on one occasion and intentionally said it incorrectly. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "You are most certainly a Prophet. Allāh *taʿālā* rightly said:

وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِيْ لَهُ

We did not teach him poetry nor does it behove him.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* did not give Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the capability to say poetry.

Now listen! We (the ʿulamā') do not even feel ashamed over the fact that outsiders who are apparently very far from Dīn and knowledge of Dīn are composing lines which even the ʿulamā' cannot do. Observe the following excellent couplet which Akbar said with reference to the Qur'ān:

> Fasting comes from īmān. When īmān disappears so does fasting. The nation's strength lies in the Qur'ān. When the Qur'ān departs from the nation, the nation will dissolve.

Iqbāl also made a beautiful statement which a person from Ma'u quoted to me. Someone asked Iqbāl is there is anyone who was more wronged than Hadrat Sayyidunā Husayn *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*? He replied: "Yes, the Qur'ān."

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[1] Sūrah Yā Sīn, 36: 69.

Another person quoted the following couplet of ʻAllāmah Iqbāl S̲āh̲ib to me with reference to the Qur'ān:

> As long as the Qur'ān does not settle in your emotions, the knot will be lose and cannot be tightened either by Rāzī nor by the author of *Kashshāf*.

What a beautiful statement! It really pleases the heart and it spontaneously makes duʻā' for these two poets for Allāh *taʻālā* to fill their graves with light. Āmīn.

Every person cannot compose such a couplet unless Allāh *taʻālā* creates an īmānī enthusiasm and yearning in his heart.

Listen! I say to you that the sole reason for the misfortune which the Muslims are experiencing today is their disregard for the Qur'ān. O people! Listen! As long as you do not turn your attention to the Qur'ān and do not believe in it, you cannot progress. Can you imagine this! We abandoned the means of success and yet we desire success like the S̲ah̲ābah!?

O Muslims! Establish a bond with the Qur'ān, recite it, and practise on the injunctions of Islam with sincerity. If you do this, Allāh *taʻālā* will – by His grace and kindness – confer you with success.

Listen! There is a Maulānā S̲āh̲ib who is a good orator. I was sitting here when he came to me and asked: "Why is it that there is no benefit from lectures nowadays?" I replied: "We have no sincerity. This is why our lectures are not effective and beneficial." The Maulānā S̲āh̲ib agreed with me and said: "More work is certainly being done today but the benefit which is missing is because there is no sincerity in us, the workers." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʻālā*.

Now listen further! Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʽAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* quoted the following text in his *Taʽlīm ad-Dīn*. All the seniors used to practise on it and this is why they were successful. He writes:

> O dervish! The criterion for this work is the Qur'ān, Sunnat and lives of the pious predecessors who were not leaders merely by virtue of being granted permission or because they were the children of pious personalities and have therefore occupied their places. Anything which contradicts the status of a shaykh is false and baseless.

As for understanding the Qur'ān, our poor Indian masses do not understand a thing. It is only the Arabs who understood the Qur'ān and valued it. No matter how much people try, they cannot reach the Arab level of Qur'ānic understanding. Just try to imagine the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed. The Arabs at that time were most eloquent in their language. They could quote 300 poems in a single assembly. Nonetheless, the Qur'ān challenged them to produce the like of the Qur'ān, then ten sūrahs like it, and eventually just one sūrah like it. Despite their eloquence and mastery over the Arabic language, they were left astounded. The entire Sūrah al-Kauthar was written and hung on the Kaʽbah. People would come and read it. No one could produce anything similar to it. When they realized that this was not the speech of the creation, they began valuing it and appreciating it. They learnt it and then taught it to others.

When Hadrat ʽIkramah ibn Abī Jahal embraced Islam and would read the Qur'ān, he would say:

هذا كلام ربي، هذا كلام ربي

This is the speech of my Lord. This is the speech of my Lord.

He would say this repeatedly and fall unconscious.

My honourable teacher, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Shāh Muh̲ammad Anwar Shāh S̲āh̲ib Kashmīrī *rah̲imahullāh*, used to say: "The services which the Muslim ummat rendered to the Qur'ān have not been surpassed by anything else." The scholars most certainly went into great detail in explaining its meanings. Read just one verse, understand it and you will be guided. But you do not take out the time to do this. How, then, will you establish an affinity with it?

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى

Successful indeed is he who purifies [himself]. And remembers the name of his Lord, then offers the s̲alāh.[1]

قوله تعالى (قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تزَكّٰى) أي طهر نفسه من الأخلاق الرذيلة وتابع ما أنزل الله على الرسول. صلوت الله وسلامه عليه. (وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى) أي أقام الصلوة في أوقاتها ابتغاء رضوان الله وطاعة لأمر الله وامتثالا لشرع الله. وقال قتادة في هذه الآية (قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكّٰى وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهٖ فَصَلّٰى) زكى ماله، وأرضى خالقه.

Successful indeed is the person who purified his self from blameworthy characteristics and followed

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿlā, 87: 14-15.

whatever Allāh taʿālā revealed to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He remembers the name of his Lord and offers salāh. In other words, he performs salāh solely for Allāh's pleasure, in obedience to His order, and in emulation of His Sharīʿat. Hadrat Qatādah radiyallāhu ʿanhu says with reference to these two verses: In other words, the person purifies his wealth and pleases his Lord.

Now I ask you, can you people come to these meanings on your own? Certainly not.

Listen further!

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ

Had We revealed this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* revealed this verse so that we may value the Qur'ān, develop respect for it in the depths of our hearts, and express gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* for having given us such a great Book. O people! On the contrary, you dishonoured it and merely cast it one side in your homes. It is now of a lesser value than your wealth and possessions. The fact of the matter is:

> O man! You considered me insignificant because you bought me for a cheap price.

What do you know of its value!

> You never saw Sulaymān *ʿalayhis salām*, so how will you ever understand the speech of ants!

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

The Qur'ān explains everything. It contains refutations of the polytheists, unbelievers, hypocrites, Christians and Jews. It has rendered every statement and belief of theirs baseless and false. However, a person has to be in this field to explain these things; it is not the work of every person to explain the Qur'ān to the laity.

You people have come here to learn about tasawwuf, so listen. Tasawwuf is not in contradiction to the Qur'ān and Hadīth. Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* said that a Sufi is one who knows the Qur'ān and Hadīth. He refers to the Sunnat as the distinguisher [between truth and falsehood]. There was a person who used to reject tasawwuf. So I said to him that the Qur'ān states:

يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهُ

They [believers] hope for His mercy.

Do you have hope in your heart? The Qur'ān states:

يَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهُ

They [believers] fear His punishment..

Do you have fear in your heart? Tasawwuf is another name for developing these qualities; it is not any different from the Qur'ān and Hadīth.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation of tasawwuf which could have been given by none other than Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh.* (compiler)

Listen! I am sitting in a place where it is not permissible for me to make concessions to anyone or to show respect to anyone. I have to show respect only to Allāh *taʿālā*, His Messenger *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the Qur'ān and the Sunnat. This is why I am

not worried about what anyone has to say. Yes, once I get down from here, you and I will be equal. Now tell me, am I being too harsh and unmannerly? Or are these the emotions of īmān which I am expressing?

Those who were present said that whatever he said most certainly stemmed from emotions and feelings of īmān. Hadrat then said:

Even today Muslims are prepared to bear harshness, but it is most unfortunate that we have abandoned our responsibilities. Consequently, we are disgraced and humiliated. History testifies to the fact that the seniors of Dīn and the sincere reformers used to say very harsh things and the people used to tolerate them. The people were prepared to shed their blood for them. But when did this happen? Only when they gauged and recognized the sincerity of these personalities. Even today if the work is done with sincerity and in emulation of the Sunnat, there will certainly be benefit, and people will recognize the value of knowledge and the people of knowledge.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most useful and beneficial theme which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is explaining with much sincerity and pain. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to choose sincerity, and to work in line with the Qur'ān, the Sunnat and the ways of the pious predecessors. Āmīn. (compiler)

The purpose of revealing the Qur'ān

Hadrat Muslih ad-Dīn Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says in his *Gulistān*:

> The purpose of revealing the Qur'ān is to acquire excellent habits and mannerisms. To be affected by it and to practise on it. It

has not been revealed to recite it with the tongue alone and to suffice with that.

Therefore, the person who suffices with verbal recitation is not fulfilling the objective of the Qur'ān; he is very far from it. A Hadīth compares it to a basil – it has a beautiful fragrance but a bad taste. In the same way, a person who is merely reading the Qur'ān is like the fragrance of basil while his heart is devoid of the effect of the Qur'ān. In fact, there are times when such a reader of the Qur'ān has qualities which are in opposition to the Qur'ān. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Note: Glory to Allāh! This is a most īmān-enlightening theme. Look at how Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* rectifies this situation. We learn how much these personalities used to practise on the texts. They understood the import of the verses, practised on them and encouraged others as well. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to take benefit from the Qur'ān and to practise on it. Āmīn. (compiler)

The same theme is expressed in the following Hadīth which describes Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

كان خلقه القرآن

His character was a manifestation of the Qur'ān.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was himself a Sufi of spiritual conditions who had a special affinity with the themes of the Qur'ān. This is why he continually related the stories of Sufi masters in his general assemblies. He did this so that it may have an effect on the audience and the people may develop an urge to develop such conditions. He used to be overcome by ecstasy when listening to the Qur'ān and

there were times when a scream would emanate from him. After a painful tragedy in Fatah̲pūr, he emigrated to Gorukhpūr around the year 1955. He was living in the house of Maulānā Nathārullāh S̲āh̲ib and Maulānā Amjadullāh S̲āh̲ib. A short time after this, he suffered from severe colic to the extent that there was no hope for his survival. However, Allāh *taʿālā* had willed for him to render more services to Dīn and the Sunnat, so He blessed him with recovery and good health.

Once he gained sufficient strength to go to the masjid, he began frequenting the masjid of Maulānā Nathārullāh S̲āh̲ib for the fajr s̲alāh and would join the congregation. Maulānā Mubīn S̲āh̲ib was leading the congregation. He read the following verse of Sūrah al-Burūj:

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ

Surely the grip of your Lord is severe.[1]

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* was so overcome that a scream emanated from him. On another occasion, the imām read the following verse from Sūrah an-Naba':

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا لِّلطّٰغِيْنَ مَاٰبًا

Surely Hell is lying in wait. An abode for the transgressors.[2]

I heard from H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* that H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Qārī Muh̲ammad T̲āhir S̲āh̲ib – the brother of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Qārī Muh̲ammad

[1] Sūrah al-Burūj, 85: 12.

[2] Sūrah an-Naba', 78: 21-22.

Tayyib Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – was leading the congregation in the masjid of Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Ashrafīyyah. When he reached the following verse, he moved back, returned to his place, and then completed the rakʿat.

وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ط اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ.

We have brought merchandise of low value. Give us in full, then, the measure and be charitable to us. Surely Allāh rewards the charitable.[1]

Glory to Allāh! Such was the level of spiritual ecstasy of our latter day seniors. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with similar conditions by virtue of our affiliation with them and our spiritual bond with them. Āmīn. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 88.

THE EFFECTS AND FRUITS OF ALLĀH'S LOVE

That amount of love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory which enables a person to carry out His orders, abstain from His prohibitions and be happy with His decree. In other words, just as salāh and fasting are compulsory, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. What this means is that just as salāh and fasting are taught, and a person is habituated into fulfilling them, love for Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be developed in the heart. This is so that His orders can be carried out, and man is happy with the fate which Allāh *taʿālā* decreed for him – whether good or bad. This love is essential because a person has to face many things in this world which are against his temperament. If he has love for Allāh *taʿālā* within him, his tongue of complaint will remain shut.

This is what I want to explain to you. That is, if a person has love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be able to practise on His injunctions and he will also be happy with his destiny. Predestination is also under Allāh's order and His decree. When a person loves Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be pleased with His order.

Listen! If you already know about this subject of Allāh's love which I am speaking on, then you will enjoy it even more. If you do not know anything about this subject, you will learn something new. You must realize that this is what is going to be of help to you.

The seniors of Dīn are forever happy with Allāh's decree, and no matter how painful a tragedy they

experience, they enjoy it thoroughly after considering it to be in line with the pleasure of the Beloved.

The manner in which you people offend each other actually amounts to bad character. When a shaykh reprimands a person for the sake of his rectification, it certainly hurts the heart, but the person must not be distressed by it. Instead, he must think to himself that he is inhabiting his heart. When a point is inhabited in the heart, then even if it causes pain, the person must think to himself that his shaykh is inhabiting his heart. He must think that Allāh *taʿālā* is inhabiting his heart. Pain of this nature is therefore a blessed pain.

The son of a saint fell ill. The saint was busy speaking to the people about Allāh *taʿālā* and other Dīnī matters. While he was occupied in this, someone announced from inside the house that the son has passed away. The people noticed that the manner and tone of the saint's speech did not change in the least. He continued speaking as he was. Only when he completed his talk did he say to them: "Brothers! Come, let's go and make his burial arrangements."

He must have certainly been grieved by the death of his child. However, because he was speaking about Allāh *taʿālā* and calling the people towards Him, there was no change in the tone and manner of his speech. If he had love for his child, he most certainly had love for Allāh *taʿālā* as well. This is why he demonstrated his love for Allāh *taʿālā* first and then turned his attention to his child.

Love of wealth

There was a H̲āfiz̲ S̲āh̲ib who used to teach a few children. He used to receive a weekly or monthly payment for this, and place the money in an earthen

pot. The boys saw this. One day, one of the boys removed all the money from the earthen pot and said: "Hāfizjī neither uses the money for himself nor does he feed us anything with it." The boys went with the money to the shops, bought several expensive food items and invited the Hāfiz Sāhib. When he arrived, he asked them: "What is the occasion for this invitation?" The boys replied: "Hadrat, it is by virtue of your company." One of the boys giggled when he heard this. The Hāfiz Sāhib paused and then hastened towards his earthen pot. When he found it empty, he fell down and died. The people of the locality were most disappointed and realized that he was deeply attached to his money. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

The people of that time learnt an admonitory lesson from this incident and realized the consequence of love for wealth. A person is certainly permitted to have love for wealth but not so much that he kills himself in the process.[1]

The *Mathnawī* contains the story of a shaykh who had an associate who was miserly and had intense love for wealth. The treatment which the shaykh prescribed for him is that he instructed him to cast one dirham daily into a river. He did not ask him to spend a certain amount of money or to give a certain amount in charity. When the man used to remove the money

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[1] On one occasion I went to the Jāmiʿ Masjid of Dammām for the jumuʿah salāh. The sermon of the imām revolved around Qur'ānic verses and Ahādīth on the despicability of worldly love for wealth. He said that this is what the Qur'ān and Ahādīth say about worldly love. It is most astonishing that so many Arabs suffered from heart attacks when the stock market fell. Just look at the extent of love for this world! It is most astonishing. (compiler)

from his money-bag, he used to place his hand on his heart. However, because it was the order of his shaykh and he was a true disciple, he carried it out until his money-bag was empty. His miserliness was also treated by then.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes that the ʿulamāʾ object and say that this was a futile act and how can it be permissible to throw away Allāh's bounty in such a way? He should have rather spent the money in Allāh's cause. However, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that if this action removes love for wealth from the heart and the person acquires love for Allāh *taʿālā* instead, then this action can certainly not be referred to as futile or wastage. The shaykh had realized that spending the money in Allāh's cause would not have treated the man's ailment. Only when the heart feels pain daily [by throwing the dirham in a river] will it be cured. In other words, his illness was chronic; therefore a mere plaster would not suffice. There was a need for an operation.

Look at how that Hāfiz Sāhib had love for this world although he was teaching the Qur'ān. He was taking the money for teaching the Qur'ān while he did not believe in the Qur'ānic teaching that sustenance is from Allāh *taʿālā*. He should not have become so distressed to the extent that he died. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes:

> If the minister feared Allāh *taʿālā* as much as he fears the king, he will become an angel.

I say, if people love Allāh *taʿālā* as much as they love their wealth, they will reach great heights. In other words, they will receive the wealth and also gain proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Now observe the following about the fruits of love. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that before this Allāh *taʿālā* made promises to His obedient servants and issued warnings to the disobedient ones. He follows it by describing the conditions of His friends:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said that this is an explanation of the results of the deeds of the believers. It is done in a manner which contains glad tidings and promises. In other words, they are given glad tidings for both worlds.

Did you hear? The believers also receive the results and fruits of their actions. The reward which a believer receives for his good actions is that he becomes a close friend of Allāh *taʿālā*. You may be

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

thinking to yourself that ʿīd is drawing near, a person will wear beautiful clothes and that this is enough as a result and fruit of his actions. It is not like that. Rather, the greatest thing which Allāh *taʿālā* gives to His devoted believers is His love, His affinity, His protection and His friendship. Allāh *taʿālā* says before the previously quoted verse:

وَمَا تَكُوْنُ فِيْ شَأْنٍ وَّمَا تَتْلُوْا مِنْهُ مِنْ قُرْاٰنٍ وَّلَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ إِلَّا كُنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ شُهُوْدًا إِذْ تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ.

You are not in any situation, neither do you recite any portion of the Qur'ān, nor do you people do any act but that We are present with you when you are engaged in it.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says with reference to the above verse:

The first part of this verse is addressed specifically to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, while the words "nor do you people do any act…" are general and include everyone – the pious and the wicked. Allāh *taʿālā* commences this verse with the word *sha'n* because it is with reference to a most august personality [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] and the actions of a great person are also great. One meaning of this word is "a matter to which much attention is given". In the second part of the address, Allāh *taʿālā* uses the word *ʿamal* (action). Allāh *taʿālā* then says that no matter what you [Muhammad Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] do – whether it is reciting the Qur'ān or something else – and you too, O believers! No matter what you do, Allāh *taʿālā* is

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 61.

present and is protecting you. It does not mean that when you have done an action, We turn away from you and look at your action. Rather, We turn Our attention to you from the time you commence the action.

Glory to Allāh! Had these great scholars not explained the Qur'ān to us, we would not have understood anything. What a unique point he explained. That is, every action of a believer is under Allāh's watchful eye at every moment. The believer himself remains in Allāh's protection at every single moment.

A personal experience

When I was a student in the madrasah and occasionally requested the teacher to re-explain the meaning of a verse in the tafsīr class, he used to think I was making an objection. He would give a reproachful answer and continue with the lesson. This, despite the fact that all I wanted was to understand the actual import of the verse.

When I went to the khānqāh in Thānah Bhawan, there was an old man who was affiliated to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* who used to teach *Tafsīr Jalālayn* after the zuhr salāh. I used to attend his class. Incidentally, he explained the following verse of Sūrah al-Baqarah:

يٰاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ.

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you may become pious.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 21.

When Hadrat *rahimahullāh* explained this verse, I realized that this is really what you call a tafsīr of the Qur'ān. Previously I used to say to myself: "O Allāh! This Qur'ān is Your speech, is this the only meaning of it?" In short, whatever tafsīr and explanation which my heart desired, I found it with Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*.

Listen! Allāh *ta'ālā* is saying:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve.

The word Auliyā'ullāh refers to the sincere servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is only His sincere servants who acquire spiritual proximity to Him. What this means is that they will never fear any evil afflicting them nor will they grieve over the departure of any beloved. This does not mean that they will not experience these things, and that if they do, they will not experience fear and grieve. Rather, what it means is that no condition will affect their enthusiasm and happiness. This is because after having full conviction in the greatness and power of Allāh *ta'ālā,* considering their own efforts to be insignificant and seeing themselves falling short in fulfilling the rights submission, they will fear being taken to task. This special type of fear is experienced only by the special and close servants of Allāh *ta'ālā*. It is what every person must strive for.

The closer a person gets to Allāh *ta'ālā*, the more his fear of Allāh *ta'ālā* increases. The following statement of Allāh *ta'ālā* is further evidence of this:

اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ

From among His servants, it is those who have understanding that fear Allāh.[1]

As for the negation of fear and grief in the previously quoted verse, the reason for it is that their objective in this world was to acquire Allāh's closeness and His pleasure through their actions. The acquisition of this is certain and – as per Allāh's promise – there is no possibility of losing it. As for other worldly matters and bounties, their acquisition and losing them are of no significance to these special servants. In fact, all worldly things are like corpses in their eyes. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

الدنيا جيفة وطلابها كلاب[2]

The world is a corpse and those who seek it are dogs.

If this is the status of the world in their eyes, it is far fetched for its acquisition or loss to influence their objective in any way. How, then, can there ever be the question of fear over its harm or grief over its loss!?

In short, whatever treasure a believer receives from Allāh *taʿālā* in exchange for Allāh's love, it is a source of internal and spiritual peace and joy. This is incomparable even to ownership of the seven continents.

> By Allāh! You will not be able to understand this wine of love until you taste it yourself.

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[1] Sūrah Fāṯir, 35: 28.

[2] كشف الخفاء ومزيل الإلباس، ج ١، ص ٣٦٢.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with a drop from His ocean of love and recognition through the blessings of our seniors. Āmīn.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (1)

A Maulānā S̲āh̲ib from a major city wrote to me saying that he happened to come across the following quotation from *Maktūbāt Maʿs̲ūmīyyah* which he heard me quoting and explaining on several occasions. He added that the effulgence of love for me and respect for my teachings engulfed his heart. The text reads thus:

> Be fully convinced of this fact that if a person possesses thousands of virtues and performs countless supernatural feats, but is lax in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then the love and company of such a person is a most toxic poison. If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act, but is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea.[1]

The Maulānā S̲āh̲ib also wrote that the mashā'ikh of today seem to be lax in their adherence to the Sunnat and following of the Sharīʿat. This is why we cannot benefit from their company as we should.

The above statement is that of H̲ad̲rat Khwājah Maʿs̲ūm *rah̲imahullāh* who is the son of H̲ad̲rat

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[1] Translation of maktūb number 67, vol. 2, addressed to Khwājah Dīnār.

Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*; I am not saying it. The words "the company of such a person is a most toxic poison" mean that a person cannot reach Allāh *taʿālā* through the company of such a person. Let alone not reaching Allāh *taʿālā*, his company will result in his deviation. It will remove him from the path of the truth and cause his destruction. The words "If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act" mean that he cannot do the things which are generally assumed to be virtuous and supernatural feats. Apart from this, there can be no greater virtue and supernatural feat than following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. What, then, can be said of the person who is firmly embedded in his emulation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*!

I replied to the Maulānā by saying: Because you wrote this, I am telling you that people are not benefiting because true benefit in the path is when a person frees himself from his carnal self. I notice that let alone wanting to free themselves from it and rectifying it, people do not want to even discuss it.

The reason why I wrote this to him is that from the quotation from *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah* "is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea" a person must realize that the thing which prevents a person from being firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is man's carnal self. Because he is firm in his obedience to his carnal self, he is far from following the Sunnat.

I wanted to show the Maulānā Sāhib that the means to firmness in obedience to the Sunnat is to be free from the demands of the carnal self. A poet rightly said:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

I say that it is not even two steps. The distance is just one step. A person must place one foot over his carnal self, and the other will fall by a beloved of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is most difficult for a person to place a foot on his carnal self. When a seeker of Allāh *taʿālā* takes the courage to place a foot on his carnal self through Allāh's inspiration, he does not have to wilfully stretch out his other foot. Rather, it is drawn towards Allāh *taʿālā* – He pulls the person towards Himself. Even if you pluck the courage and place your foot on your carnal self, He will draw you towards Himself and you will reach Him.

Who today is prepared to subdue his carnal self? Who is there to antagonize it? Today, a person finds a shaykh and feels that mere physical proximity to him is enough. Only blessings from him are considered sufficient. He is not prepared to imbibe the teachings of the shaykh.

I say that the Qur'ān and Sunnat really need to be made sources of blessings. The only time we will be blessed is when we cling to the Qur'ān and Sunnat. After all, the original blessings are from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. How can a person who does not adopt them for blessings ever be blessed? Adopting the blessings of the Qur'ān and Hadīth entails accepting their instructions and injunctions, and practising on them.

Listen to what Allāh *taʿālā* says about the carnal self which you have cast aside:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the following statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[3]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك[٤]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

We learn from the above-quoted texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth that the carnal self is something which one needs to be wary of.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

[4] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

This is what I mean when I say that when a person is not firm in following the Sunnat, it is because of his carnal self. When man understands this and begins acting against the demands of his self, he receives help from Allāh *taʿālā* who then draws him to Himself.

A convincing reply of a saint

A king was sitting in his palace when a saint happened to pass by. The king lowered his rope-ladder and asked the saint to come up. When he came up, the king asked him: "How did you reach Allāh *taʿālā*?" He replied: "In the same way as I reached you." In other words, if I wanted to reach you, the guards of the palace would have stopped me. Then I do not know how long it would take for the information to reach you. In fact, I do not know if the guards will even inform you of my arrival. But when you yourself called me, you lowered the rope-ladder and I came up to you.

In the same way, if a person wants to reach Allāh *taʿālā* through his own efforts, he will find it quite difficult. But if Allāh *taʿālā* draws the person to Himself, it will be very easy. However, it is Allāh's norm to only draw a person towards Himself when He sees a genuine quest and sincerity in the person. When he places a foot on his carnal self, Allāh *taʿālā* draws the person to Himself.

Treading the path is essential before being drawn by Allāh

Look! Even in this case, the king drew the saint up when the latter came close to his palace. When the saint left his house and came towards the palace, this was his sulūk. The jadhb [being drawn up] was based

on his sulūk. We learn from this that before jadhb, sulūk is essential.

The path is closed to us because our feet are not firmly placed on our carnal selves. Firmness against the carnal self is not possible without following the Sunnat. This is why following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is essential.

Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* says: All the paths are shut to the creation except to the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

The carnal self is most harmful. It prevents a person from the path to Allāh *taʿālā.* This is why it ought to be trampled.

I ask you, how much have you trampled your carnal self? To what extent did you obliterate it? The saints bore many hardships in trying to subjugate the nafs-e-ammārah (the self which prompts a person towards evil). Only then did they defeat it. Striving is therefore essential.

Spiritual exercises to dream of Rasūlullāh

There was a saint who used to enable people to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in their dream. His wife said to him one day: "Enable me to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as well." He replied: "Very well, but I take 1 000 rupees from those who want to do this. This rule will apply to you as well. Go and bring 1 000 rupees." She asked: "From where am I going to bring such an amount?" He said: "If you do not have the money, I cannot enable you to do this." His wife was severely distressed and thought to herself that he enables everyone to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* while she is deprived just

because she doesn't have the money. On seeing her grief, he said to her: "Okay, there is one way to achieve this. Go take a bath, wear clean clothes, apply antimony to your eyes, perfume yourself, and so on." The wife thought she will be able to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, therefore, no matter how much she adorns herself it will not be enough. She went and did as she was told. In the meantime, the saint went and summoned his wife's brother and said to him: "Go and have a look at your sister. She is so old, yet she desires to look like a bride."

Her brother made a few disparaging remarks which caused her to feel quite embarrassed. She then said to her husband: "You did all this in order to humiliate me." Saying this, she began crying. As she continued crying, she fell into a slumber. The saint directed his focus on her and she saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in her dream.

The mystery behind this is that the money which the saint used to take from the people was not for himself. Rather, by asking them to give such a large amount of money, he wanted them to go through some striving and thereby purify their hearts. Once the heart is purified, it would develop the capability to see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

He was a qualified shaykh and knew that he could not purify his wife's heart in the manner in which the hearts of the others were purified. This is why he used a different approach.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the wisdom-filled incident related by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. We ought to bear it in mind. Spending our wealth results in the cleansing and purification of our hearts. This enables us to acquire spiritual qualities. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Whether it is the wife of a walī or anyone else, it is incumbent on every person to purify his self. Īmān is not complete unless the carnal self is subdued. A person is not able to develop vigilance without this. Uprightness in one's consciousness is required when following orders. When there is vigilance and consciousness, a person will be able to understand the orders and prohibitions, and he will be able to practise on them. How can an unconscious person follow the Sunnat!?

Hadrat Mansūr *rahimahullāh* was overwhelmed by unconsciousness. Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haq Radaulwī *rahimahullāh* (d. 837 A.H.) says with reference to him: "Mansūr was an infant when he got up screaming with just a single drop. Here there are men who are drinking oceans after oceans and have not burped as yet."

Actions are needed for spiritual ecstasy

We are attracted to the spiritual conditions of the saints but we do not look at their complete focus and following of the Sharīʿat. While proceeding from his house to the masjid, a saint's attendant was repeatedly saying, "Haqq, haqq." The saint was not conscious at all, but he was proceeding by the sound. There are countless incidents related to how the saints adhered strictly to the Sharīʿat. If you were to hear them, you will be left astounded. However, you considered their spiritual conditions to be sweet and embraced them, and felt their actions to be bitter, so you cast them aside.

Listen! The moustache of Shaykh Sharaf ad-Dīn Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* was gone quite long, but no one had the courage to tell him to clip it. Qādī Diyā' ad-Dīn Sināmī was quite vociferous in matters of the

Sharīʿat. One day he took a scissor in one hand, held the shaykh's beard with his other hand, and clipped his moustache.

It is said that ever since that day, the Shaykh would repeatedly kiss his beard and say: "This beard was held for the sake of the Sharīʿat so it has become valuable."

Look at their bond with the Sharīʿat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Anything which became affiliated to the Sharīʿat became beloved in their eyes. The Dīn and Sharīʿat of Allāh *taʿālā* are most certainly blessed. This is a trust which we received from Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. No matter how much consideration and respect we show to it, and no matter how much we safeguard it, it will not be enough.

I recall another incident so I will relate it to you. There was a saint who used to listen to samāʿ. On one occasion he was overcome by such an intense ecstasy that he remained unconscious for three days. Despite this, when it was the time of s̲alāh, he would perform wud̲ū' and perform his s̲alāh exactly as prescribed by the Sharīʿat. When he regained consciousness, his attendants said to him that three days had passed since he lost consciousness. He asked them: "Did I perform my s̲alāhs?" They replied in the affirmative. He then sent someone to Shaykh Muh̲ammad ʿĪsā who was his khalīfah to ask him if the s̲alāhs he had performed were valid or not. He replied: "It was the same s̲alāh which H̲ad̲rat performed while his heart had left this world. Out of consideration to the Sharīʿat you will have to repeat them."

Did you see their adherence to and consideration of the Sharīʿat! People are thinking that the shaykh is unconscious, but at the approach of a s̲alāh time, he

is performing wudū’, performing his salāh in the exact number of rakʿats as prescribed, and fulfilling all other etiquette of salāh. When these people are not conscious, then it is as regards us and worldly matters. As for matters related to Allāh *taʿālā* and the Hereafter, they are fully conscious. They are firm in their adherence to the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat. They consider themselves to be nothing because they have cast aside the enjoyment of the carnal self.

I mentioned these few points as explanations to the point of “being firm” as quoted in *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah.* I had no intention of saying anything today. The Hakīm Sāhib also advised me not to speak today because I will get fatigued. Now listen to the remainder of what Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib was saying.

Nowadays we see that in addition to the laity, the elite – through their actions - seem to be rejecting the rectification of the self. If they are going to disregard it in such a way, how will they ever understand the plotting of the self and how will they save themselves from it? Whereas Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* states in *Ihyā’* that it is fard-e-ʿayn to rectify the self. Fard-e-ʿayn means that it is compulsory on every single person.

> The most intricate of the sciences of interactions is the deceptions of the carnal self and the traps of Shaytān. This is obligatory on every person, but people have disregarded it and become occupied with sciences which create whisperings in their hearts, enable Shaytān to take control of them, and cause them to forget his enmity and the manner of safeguarding them from him.

We learn from the above that the science of deceptions of the self and traps of Shayṯān is the most intricate, subtle and complex of sciences. This is why it is generally disregarded. After all, it is easy for anyone and everyone to understand things which are glaring and clear, e.g. performing s̲alāh, fasting; the evils of stealing and speaking lies, etc. On the other hand, complex and intricate matters can be understood only by the one who has perfect insight and a genuine quest. As for the one who has no insight at all or there is a defect in his quest, he will not be inspired to save himself from the traps of Shayṯān and the deceptions of the carnal self.

Whether it is difficult or easy, Imām Ghazzālī *raẖimahullāh* says that it is compulsory for every person, just as the compulsion of s̲alāh and zakāh. If man does not know this, he will succumb to whisperings. Shayṯān will overpower him, he will not be aware of Shayṯān's enmity, and will not know how to save himself from him. Consequently, he will suffer losses in this world and in the Hereafter. The following verse will apply to him:

خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ

He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوْا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ

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[1] Sūrah al-Ḫajj, 22: 11.

وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ ۙ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ؕ إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُوْرًا.

Worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him. Do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is a relative, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the traveller, and what your hands possess, i.e. your slave-girls. Surely Allāh does not like the self-conceited and boastful.[1]

In keeping with the temperament of the Sufis, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the words "the companion by your side" to refer to the carnal self. He presents the following Hadīth as proof, i.e.

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Since the verse instructs us to do good to all those mentioned, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the good which one has to do by one's self is:

أن تحبسها في سجن العبودية وتحرقها بنيران المحبة[2]

To confine it in the prison of servitude and burn it with the fire of love.

Nowadays no one knows what is servitude nor does anyone understand love. To be imprisoned in the prison of servitude means to ensure that the carnal self adheres to the duties of worship and servitude,

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 36.

[2] روح المعاني، سورة النساء، آية ٣٦ (من باب الإشارة).

and to cling to the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, this is not achieved with ease. It needs a catalyst, and that catalyst is love. Love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will have to be developed in the heart, and a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be established. This is known as nisbat or affinity. After this it will become easy for the person to fulfil the duties of servitude. In other words, he will be able to imprison himself in the prison of servitude. The company of the mashā'ikh is the tried and tested way of acquiring that catalyst and affinity. A person remains in their service, acquires love, and through love he will be able to fulfil the duties of servitude. As man progresses in this path, he will reach the level of Allāh-recognition.

Note: We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us to remain in the company of His true servants, and to bless us with His love and recognition through them. Āmīn. (compiler)

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (2)

I quoted the following couplet one day:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

You people really liked the subject matter of this couplet. I had said to you that the saint who compiled the couplet is talking about two steps. He is correct to a certain extent, but in reality it is just one step, viz. placing one's foot on one's carnal self. In other words, curtailing its desires because this is the obstacle in the path to the Beloved.

Shaykh Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

> There is no external obstacle between the lover and the Beloved. O Hāfiz! You yourself are the obstacle. You should therefore move away.

In other words, obliterate your self so that you can reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

Once this foot has been placed correctly, then as per the words of Shaykh Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh*:

> Traverse the path to this point with the feet of a genuine quest. After that you can fly with the wings of love.

The second step which is referred to is the step of jadhb which comes from the Beloved out of His grace.

However, because it is dependent on the first step, it is referred to as a step by way of similarity. This path is made up of sulūk (treading) and jadhb (drawing or pulling).

The couplet in which the saint said this makes reference to placing the first foot on the carnal self. In the words of Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*, it refers to acquiring knowledge of the evils and traps of the carnal self. This knowledge is compulsory. The second step is that of love. The love of Allāh *taʿālā* is also compulsory. Its acquisition is also essential because it is a means for the fulfilment of other obligations.

Yesterday I wanted to speak about the second step, but people came to meet me and I didn't get the time. I thought I should speak about it today, but what can I say when people are neither prepared to listen nor to learn. The laity are after all the laity. I expected the ʿulamā' to listen and understand, but they have no time from their occupations. Even when they come to us, we do not know what they are seeking because they do not have the time to listen and understand correctly.

Now listen! The Ahlullāh themselves are left confused about the first foot. I will therefore explain to them first and then to you people. Try and understand the second step. Allāh willing, I will explain that first because I see that the laity do have some inclination towards Dīn. There is a need to work, but there is a defect in the workers. This is why the work is not accomplished.

I am not using the word "step" or any other similar word. Rather, I am quoting what Allāh *taʿālā* is saying:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* is saying that if you want admission into Paradise, you will have to stop the carnal self from its desires, and be fearful after being mindful of the fact that you are going to be presented before Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of all this is to place a foot on the carnal self. Now that you have got the fear of standing before Allāh *taʿālā*, listen to one Hadīth in this regard.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that there will be three presentations on the day of Resurrection. One will be of disputation, the other of apologies, and in the third presentation, the books of deeds will be flung aside.[2]

In his explanation to this Hadīth, Hakīm Tirmidhī says that the first presentation [of disputation] will be for the unbelievers. They will not have the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* so they will dispute even there. They will assume that they will be freed in this way. The second presentation will be that of apologies. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* will establish His proof against the unbelievers, and an apology will be presented before all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. The third presentation will be of the believers. They will be reprimanded in privacy so that they may feel ashamed. This will be their punishment. They will then be forgiven and Allāh *taʿālā* will be pleased with them.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] *Mishkāt Sharīf*, p. 435.

It is mentioned in certain narrations that many of the believers will be so ashamed by this reprimand that they will fall unconscious.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* presents a scene of that presentation:

> On the day of Resurrection people will be presented before Allāh *taʿālā* as an army is presented before a king. A person will be made to stand before Allāh *taʿālā* in a way which is in line with the might and power of Allāh *taʿālā*. The person will then be questioned as Allāh *taʿālā* wills. What can be said about the condition of a person who, due to his intense bashfulness, will find that the flesh from his face will fall off!?[1]

Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when people stand before Allāh *taʿālā* on the day of Resurrection, their books of deeds will be beneath the Throne. Allāh *taʿālā* will send a wind which will convey the books of deeds to the people – in the right hand of some and in the left hand of others. The first thing which will be written in the books of deeds will be:

اِقْرَاْ كِتٰبَكَ ؕ كَفٰى بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيْبًا

Read your book! You yourself are sufficient today to take your own account.[2]

This is a small glimpse of the presentation before Allāh *taʿālā* which I explained to you. Just try and

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[1] *Al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir.*

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 14.

imagine what it will be like. It is because of this presentation that all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, and their deputies, the Auliyā’ and the righteous believers are worried.

Now listen to another verse:

Allāh *taʿālā* is addressing H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām*:

يَا دَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ.

O Dāwūd! We made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desire of the self or else it would lead you astray from the path of Allāh.[1]

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* issues one order to H̲ad̲rat Dāwūd *ʿalayhis salām* and one prohibition. He is ordered to rule with justice among people. When man does not act on injunctions of this nature, then it is because of the carnal self. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* issues a prohibition by saying, do not follow the desire of the self or else it will move you away from the straight path and cause you to fall into severe punishment. Man follows his carnal self when he becomes unmindful of the interrogation on the day of Resurrection.

This is why I refer to this as the first step. I speak a lot about it and can continue speaking extensively on this subject.

Listen! When I returned to my hometown after spending time with my shaykh, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā

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[1] Sūrah S̲ād, 38: 26.

Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, I began speaking about the carnal self. Bearing in mind that hypocrisy is one of the evils which stems from the carnal self, I began speaking on the subject of hypocrisy as well. I said to the people that you probably do not like me to speak on this subject but I am not bothered about your likes and dislikes. We will speak about whatever Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

الم. ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۛ فِيْهِ ۛ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ. اَلَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ. أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ.

Alif Lām Mīm. There is no doubt in this book. (It) guides those who fear. Who believe in the unseen, and establish salāh, and what We provided them as sustenance, they spend (thereof). And those who believe in what has been sent down to you and in what was sent down before you. And of the Hereafter they are convinced. These people are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who shall reach their goal.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then describes the condition of the unbelievers:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَ أَنْذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ. خَتَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ وَعَلٰى سَمْعِهِمْ ۗ وَعَلٰى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ ۫ وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 1-5.

Surely those who have disbelieved, the same it is to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. Allāh has set a seal on their hearts and on their ears; and on their eyes is a veil. And for them is a mighty punishment.[1]

These are the traits of the unbelievers. They are completely opposite to those of the believers. The believers obey while the unbelievers reject. The believers are on guidance while the unbelievers are devoid of it. The believers will be successful while the unbelievers will receive a mighty punishment.

Allāh *taʿālā* describes the condition of the hypocrites as follows:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّقُوْلُ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Of people are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day", yet they are definitely not believers.[2]

From this verse to the end of the section, Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about the hypocrites. So you see how Allāh *taʿālā* describes the hypocrites after speaking about the believers and unbelievers. This is why the ʿulamā' and reformers spoke on these subjects in their respective eras. Why, then, should we not speak about these subjects? You see Maulānā ʿAbd al-Halīm Sāhib sitting here. He brought me *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* and presented it to me. In this book, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* goes at length in discussing the hypocrites. I also spoke on the same subject. Some ʿulamā' were quite offended by this. They could not say anything to me, but they began opposing my

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 6-7.

[2] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 8.

associates. Many educated people are suffering from this ailment [of hypocrisy]. This is why I refer to it as the currency of today.

I used to say to my self: Be ashamed of Allāh *taʿālā*. These masses are better than you. They do not even have an iota of the evil traits which are within you.

When I returned to my hometown, I initially related the themes of Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. But then I myself did not feel any satisfaction in relating them to the people. I realized that these themes were beyond their understanding, and so, they will not really benefit. I then began speaking about the carnal self. I myself felt satisfied and realized that I was saying something which was useful to them as well.

The subject of the carnal self is not a very interesting subject, so in the beginning, people did not pay much attention to it. But I said to myself that I am going to speak about it irrespective of whether anyone listens or not.

Subsequently, a Maulānā Sāhib said to me: "As you continued speaking on this subject and said that you will carry on irrespective of whether anyone listens or not, it became appealing to us."

I perceived a certain type of energy within me after speaking on this subject. I realized that because it relates to piety and purity, Allāh *taʿālā* approves of it and people too are benefiting from it.

In this regard, I also quoted the following Hadīth to the people:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

In this Hadīth, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is begging Allāh *taʿālā* for piety of the self. On one hand we learn that piety of the self is something to be sought. On the other hand, we also learn that this is not acquirable by our own selves – we cannot purify it by ourselves. It requires the grace and kindness of Allāh *taʿālā*. I asked the people: "What do you think of this Hadīth?" They replied: "It is excellent and most worthy of practising on." In other words, every Muslim must continually make this duʿā' with earnestness until he is embellished by the garment of piety so that the path to success becomes easy. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (3)

One of the reasons why people are negligent towards the carnal self is that they have given up studying it totally. If the ʿulamā' were to study this field and teach it to the laity, they will learn it as they learn other aspects of Dīn such as salāh and fasting.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْهُدٰى، وَالتُّقٰى، وَالْعَفَافَ، وَالْغِنٰى

O Allāh! I ask You for guidance, righteousness, chastity, and contentment

Since Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* uttered these words with his blessed tongue, this becomes a verbal Sunnat. It becomes necessary for us to say it, memorize it and practise on it.

If Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* did not exert so much of effort in compiling these duʿā's in *Munājāt-e-Maqbūl*, we would have been totally deprived of them.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ رِزْقًا طَيِّبًا، وَّعِلْمًا نَّافِعًا، وَّعَمَلًا مُّتَقَبَّلًا

O Allāh! I ask You for wholesome sustenance, useful knowledge, and actions which are accepted [by You].

Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says that if I do not receive any wealth or point of knowledge on any day, I consider that day to have been wasted.

Listen! These are the Sunnats of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu *ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Is it not necessary for us to practise on them? Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is making a duʿā’ and asking Allāh *taʿālā* for wholesome sustenance – this is a physical food. He is asking for beneficial knowledge which is a spiritual food. And he is asking for actions which are accepted – this is a provision for the Hereafter, this is what will help us there.

The other reason why I feel it is necessary to study the carnal self is that piety is necessary for the life of the Hereafter. It has been learnt through experience and observation that even this worldly life is only set right when the carnal self is rectified and character is put right. As for those who discarded Allāh’s path for the sake of worldly pleasures and comforts, we do not see them enjoying any worldly comforts. Instead, every house has succumbed to problems and every person is complaining about the other who interfered with his worldly wellbeing.

Listen! If we were to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for our needs through our intellects and sought refuge from evil, it would have been very difficult for us to encompass everything. However, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentioned all your needs, necessities and the things from which you are supposed to seek refuge in these duʿā’s. For example, he says:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُبِكَ مِنْ سُوْءِ الْعُمْرِ وَفِتْنَةِ الصَّدْرِ، اَعُوْذُ بِعِزَّتِكَ، لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ اَنْ تُضِلَّنِيْ، وَمِنْ جُهْدِ الْبَلَآءِ، وَدَرْكِ الشِّقَآءِ، وَسُوْءِ الْقَضَآءِ، وَشَمَاتَةِ الْاَعْدَآءِ.

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from an ill-fated age and from the trials of the chest. I seek refuge in Your honour

- there is none worthy of worship but You - that You lead me astray, and [I seek refuge in You] from adverse calamities, the experiencing of misfortune, an evil decree, and the malice of enemies.

After this, Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said something which includes everything:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَمِلْتُ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا لَمْ اَعْمَلْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا عَلِمْتُ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَا لَمْ اَعْلَمْ. وَمِنْ زَوَالِ نِعْمَتِكَ، وَتَحَوُّلِ عَافِيَتِكَ، وَفُجَآءَةِ نِقْمَتِكَ، وَجَمِيْعِ سَخَطِكَ

And from the evil which I committed and the evil which I did not commit, from the evil which I am aware of and the evil which I am unaware of. [I seek refuge in You] from the cessation of Your bounties, the turning away of Your peace, Your sudden punishment, and all which would warrant Your wrath.

Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then mentions each body part from which evil could emanate:

وَمِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّيْ.

[I seek refuge in You] from the evil of my hearing, the evil of my eyesight, the evil of my tongue, the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.

Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from the evil of all these things so that a pure and wholesome life may be experienced. In addition to seeking refuge from his ears, eyes and heart; he sought refuge from his semen.

To this day I have never heard any ʿālim teaching anyone to seek refuge from his semen. Consequently,

if you were to mention this word in any assembly, people will remove you from the pulpit and say: “O Maulānā S̲āh̲ib! What are these things which you are saying!?” Whereas since Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made this duʿā’, it becomes his Sunnat.

It is the duty of teachers to teach their students about the repugnance of semen, and teach them piety and purity. I notice the madrasah authorities wanting to bring new and young teachers to teach and train students. I ask them: “What are you doing? What training will they be able to impart? When did they learn to train others? They themselves are in need of training! It is essential for a murabbī (mentor) to have himself mentored first. Only then will he be able to train others.”

Listen! When you do not discuss these matters out of piety, your youth are getting spoilt. You are sitting back with your shamefulness, while the carnal self and Shayt̲ān are making the youth shameless.

You are not teaching them but Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught it because he was most affectionate to his ummat. He was a Messenger for the youth as well. This is why he said to them: “O youth! Seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from your semen as well.”

I am openly saying that the piety which we do not see in our youth today is because we do not teach them piety. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* relates that his father advised him thus during his final moments in this world:

> O son! Abstain from desires and passions. Passion is a fire. Do not increase the heat of the fire of Hell upon yourself by becoming immersed in passion.

The need for piety and purity

The first thing to do is for a person to acquire piety and purity in this world. As for the other levels of saintliness, they will come later on. The more you imbibe piety, the more you will progress and acquire the levels of saintliness.

The topic of piety reminded me of something. There was a man who used to come to me frequently. One of his friends asked him: "Do you also go there?" (his friend was on a different line of thinking) He replied: "Yes, I go there and I will certainly go because he only teaches us about piety and purity. He reads the Qur'ān and teaches us piety and purity. He relates Ahādīth to us and teaches us the same things. He does not speak on other matters. If piety and purity are bad things, then consider me to be a member of that group in which I am – I am with them."

We learn from this that just as piety and purity are liked by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, they are liked by people of sound minds and sound dispositions. When a person speaks about piety and purity in their presence, they listen to him attentively and enthusiastically. Subsequently, many people affiliate themselves to him solely on the basis of piety and purity.

Love for the pious is a sign of goodness

In these times of evil and tribulations, it is no small thing for a person to be attracted to piety and purity, and to like those who have these qualities. In fact, piety actually commences when a person likes piety and has good thoughts about pious people. Through the blessings of this, he will – inshā Allāh – be included among the pious. He will then progress gradually and become firmly embedded in piety and

purity. He too will reach a certain level of proximity and closeness with Allāh *taʿālā*.

I therefore say to all of you in general and to the youth in particular that you must give full attention to piety, and also beg Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire you towards it. Memorize the duʿā's which I read to you today and make them in the exact words said by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The duʿā' is:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

The other duʿā' is:

(اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ) مِنْ شَرِّ سَمْعِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ بَصَرِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ لِسَانِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ قَلْبِيْ، وَمِنْ شَرِّ مَنِيِّيْ.

[I seek refuge in You] from the evil of my hearing, the evil of my eyesight, the evil of my tongue, the evil of my heart, and the evil of my semen.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* accept these duʿā's in our favour. Āmīn. (compiler)

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (4)

For several days I have been speaking about love for Allāh *taʿālā* and establishing a bond with Him, but it is difficult to explain and make you understand. I will therefore explain it to you in a different way which is both concise and easy to understand. The speech of people of insight and spiritual ecstasy is a bit difficult to comprehend. This is why I would like to explain it according to my understanding but in the words of the ʿulamā'.

The ʿulamā' say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory just as s̲alāh and fasting are compulsory. The author of *Fath̲ al-Bārī* writes:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدر، فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فلتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، قدم الهوى على المحبة. والندب أن يواظب على النوافل ويجتنب الوقوع في الشبهات، والمتصف عموما بذلك نادر.[١]

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from

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[1] فتح الباري، ج !.

His disobedience and being pleased with His decree. If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over love. Desirable love means that a person must regularly perform optional acts and abstain from falling into doubtful actions. Generally there are very few people who have this type of love.

We learn from the above that actions become easy on account of love, and that a person acquires pleasure with divine decree. It is obligatory to acquire this much of love because if divine injunctions are obligatory, then acquiring love for them will be obligatory on every person.

The acquisition of love is essential because it is obligatory in itself and also a means to fulfilling other obligations. When the mashā'ikh speak on this type of love, they do it in a manner which is enjoyable to others, has an effect on them, but is not understood by them. For example, I had quoted this couplet to you previously:

> Allāh *taʿālā* knows that the path to reaching the beloved is no more than two steps – one foot is to be placed on the carnal self and the other is to be placed with Allāh's friend.

You enjoy listening to this couplet but what does it mean? What is the meaning of two steps? Are they exactly two steps or could they be more or less? The mashā'ikh themselves have different views in explaining it. Some of them say it refers to two steps, others say four, and yet others say ten.

And when I explained it to you [in a previous lecture] I had told you that it refers to just one step. You people too may be thinking to yourselves what does two steps mean. What type of steps are they through which a person reaches Allāh *taʿālā*? We have already taken so many steps in going to the masjid, going to the Kaʿbah, etc. but we haven't reached as yet.

The saints made this statement when in a certain spiritual condition and as regards a specific station, and we are having difficulties in understanding it. It is also difficult to explain.

This is what I was referring to when I said that whatever the mashā'ikh said with regard to love is difficult to understand. When the ʿulamā' explain the same thing, they do it in a manner which is understood by all because they [ʿulamā'] are the heirs of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

They say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. In other words, that amount of love which enables a person to carry out His orders. Furthermore, he must be so pleased with divine decree that no matter what hardships, pains and tragedies he experiences, he is able to bear them patiently, the dislikes become acceptable because of that love, and bitter things feel sweet. A poet says:

> Bitter things become sweet on account of love.

There is an Arabic saying:

ضَرْبُ الْحَبِيْبِ زَبِيْبٌ

Even the strike of a beloved is a [sweet] raisin.

Some people were lashing a man but he did not utter a single word of complaint. He finally screamed out.

The people wanted to know why he did not say a single word when he was lashed so many times, and yet he screamed out now. They learnt that his beloved was before him all along. He was so engrossed in looking at his beloved that he did not feel any of the pain from the lashes. At the time when he had screamed, his beloved had moved away. This is why he felt the pain of that one lash.

This is the condition of pseudo lovers. From this you can gauge that if a person is in love with the True Beloved, how much more pains he will be ready to bear!

Not long ago, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muftī Muh̲ammad H̲asan S̲āh̲ib Amritsarī *rah̲imahullāh* who is a khalīfah of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* was suffering from some pain in his legs. The doctors advised that they will have to be amputated. When it was the time to amputate his legs, all the doctors informed him that they will anesthetize him first. He said that there is no need to do that; they must merely amputate his legs. They did as told. The operation took several hours, but when he was brought out of the operation room, he was smiling and joyful.

The people asked him: "H̲ad̲rat, you went through such a painful experience but you did not utter a single word of complaint!?" He replied: "What actually happened is that I turned my focus on Allāh *taʿālā*. The rewards which I was to receive in the Hereafter were brought in front of me. I became so engrossed in looking at them that I did not feel any discomfort." You can rephrase this and refer to it as love. In other words, the love of Allāh *taʿālā* which was in his heart did its work – he became so immersed with Allāh *taʿālā* that the joy which he was experiencing caused him to completely disregard the discomfort.

I am explaining all this in line with your understanding. If I were to speak the language of the Sufis, you will get astounded and confused.

There was a wealthy man who had a slave. He was slicing cucumbers and giving his slave to eat. The master decided to have one slice as well. When he took a bite he found it to be extremely bitter. He said to the slave: "This cucumber is so bitter, yet you are eating it all this while!? You did not even tell me that it is bitter!?" The reply of the slave is something to be remembered.

He said: "I have always been eating sweet things from your hands. If I receive something bitter one day, should I make a face and complain? It is totally against the demand and nature of love."

The Sufis really approve of this reply. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* related it to us on many occasions, but we would experience a new joy each time he related it to us.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to relate this incident to us when talking about the countless bounties of Allāh *taʿālā* which we use at every moment. Therefore, if we experience any discomfort from Him, we must welcome it with a smiling face and exercise patience. It must not be that we constantly rejoice over bounties but complain over the slightest discomfort.

This world is a place of discomfort. It has afflictions, pains and grief. There is no solution apart from love for them. There is nothing but discomfort here. The place of real comfort is Paradise.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says in one of his supplications:

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَا عَيْشَ اِلَّا عَيْشُ الْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh! There is no life except the life of the Hereafter.

Discomfort and pain are inevitable in this world. There is only one way to save ourselves from them, and that is to love Allāh *taʿālā*. When that happens, there will be no discomfort and inconvenience.

Some people asked a saint: "Hadrat, how are you feeling?" He replied: "Of what use is there in asking such a person how he is feeling who does not experience anything of this world which is against his likes?" They asked: "What do you mean?" He replied: "Brothers, the fact of the matter is that nothing in this world happens without Allāh's pleasure, and we have obliterated our own pleasure in His pleasure. Therefore, no matter what happens, it is as though it is in line with my pleasure. How, then, can there be any question of feeling offended or expressing disapproval?"

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ الصِّحَّةَ وَالْعِفَّةَ وَالْاَمَانَةَ وَحُسْنَ الْخُلُقِ وَالرِّضَا بِالْقَدْرِ[1]

O Allāh! I beg You for good health, chastity, trustworthiness, good character and to be pleased with Your decree.

Look! In this supplication Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also asked Allāh *taʿālā* for the ability to be pleased with His decree. The reason for this is that this world is a world of discomforts. Man faces tragedies and pains here. It is not possible to

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[1] فيض القدير شرح الجامع الصغير، ج ٢، ص ١٣٩.

bear them and be pleased with them without having love for Allāh *taʿālā*. When faced with situations of this nature, man is generally terrified and grief-stricken. It is only when he is pleased with Allāh's decree can he experience peace and tranquillity.

The ʿulamā' say that the first part of a tragedy is what has to be made bearable and that is the time of the real test. After that, everyone has patience. This is the meaning of the Hadīth:

اَلصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُوْلٰى

The time of patience is at the beginning of the tragedy.

When a person has Allāh's love in him, he thinks to himself that whatever comes from my Friend is best.

In other words, a person must think that this tragedy is from Allāh *taʿālā*. When he does this, he enjoys it. When Hadrat Rābiʿah Basrīyyah *rahimahallāh* used to get a fever she would be overjoyed and would say: "This is a gift from my Beloved."

Just as you welcome and receive your honourable guest, the Ahlullāh welcome tragedies with patience.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that if a husband troubles his wife, there is only one treatment for it. She must create love for her husband in her heart to such an extent that he must perceive her intense love for him. When he learns that she loves him intensely, he will never humiliate her. This is because the reflection of love falls on the heart of the beloved.

If you people love me, I will respond by loving you. This is an inevitable response. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* explained this point very well. If you

people understand it, you will be able to live with much comfort.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُم مَّوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً

He placed between you affection and mercy.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* placed affection and mercy between husband and wife. The fruit of this is that you have love for each other.

We noticed that when a shaykh becomes displeased, some people feel offended. But those who have love for the shaykh do not feel offended. In any case, love is put to a test at times of displeasure and anger.

If a seeker truly loves his shaykh, then his love for him increases when his shaykh is displeased with him or takes him to task. This is because he understands that the reason why his shaykh is treating him in this way is for the sake of his reformation. His displeasure is actually an act of real affection. If the person did not love the shaykh, he would have fled from there.

Hadrat used to say: "Not of 100 goldsmiths nor of one ironmonger." He would then say that this means that you may be doing many external actions, but these will not be enough, and you will find the path very long. But if you develop just one love, it will outweigh all those actions. Love is also essential to carry out Allāh's orders. If love is absent, even obligatory actions will not be fulfilled. Even if they are fulfilled, they will be done superficially and as customs.

[1] Sūrah ar-Rūm, 30: 21.

Dear brothers! The issue of love is a difficult issue, but it is necessary. This is why I am trying to explain it to you. If I am not going to flow in my explanation, you will get scared. I explained it to you in the language of the 'ulamā' so that I can make you understand. The language of the Sufis is difficult.

Furthermore, these themes are generally not discussed, so they will appear new to you. It will not be understood in just one sitting. Only when I explain it to you repeatedly will you be able to understand it.

If you understand this theme which I am explaining to you, it will be by Allāh's grace and your kindness in the sense that you listened attentively and understood it. Over and above this, teaching and training are difficult tasks. We make du'ā' that Allāh *ta'ālā* makes it ease for all of us.

The Ahlullāh obliterate their selves

The Ahlullāh obliterate their selves and reach Allāh *ta'ālā* in this way. After subduing the carnal self, they make it obedient to Allāh *ta'ālā*. Subsequently, based on the self not opposing them – in fact, based on making their body parts subservient to Allāh *ta'ālā* – they develop love for Him.

A lover says:

> People say that I am proud of my eyes. It is because I have beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

When he said "I am proud", then you must understand that these true lovers of Allāh *ta'ālā* have submitted themselves totally before Him; there is no

need for them to vex pride. However, when they see that when these body parts were, until now, disobedient to Allāh *taʿālā*, and they have become totally obedient to Him after striving to this end and making many sacrifices to the extent of putting a complete end to their rebelliousness –they become extremely happy and give thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* for this favour. The poet expressed all this by saying "I am proud".

These are most beautiful couplets. If you read them, they will develop a pain and a pining [for Allāh *taʿālā*] in your heart.

Love is not confined to losses and scarcity. Rather, it also entails enjoyment and pleasure. A poet says:

> If a true lover were to express the joy of love, Masīh̲ and Khid̲r would also wish for it.

Another poet says:

> Although there are calamities and tragedies on the path of love, they are not bad. This pain is most enjoyable.

However, because people do not know the joy of love, they do not give attention to it. Furthermore, it is necessary to subjugate the carnal self and desires; and this is difficult. This is why they do not adopt it.

I spoke on the subject of love in one place and a person was highly affected by it. He went around saying to people: "O brother! You must listen to his lecture; it is most beneficial and thoroughly enjoyable."

In that talk I had related the story of H̲ad̲rat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām*. I heard from H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* that when H̲ad̲rat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* was put through a

test, he fell ill and his entire body had wounds. Worms began living and breeding in those wounds, so he made duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* saying: “O Allāh! Protect my tongue from this illness so that I could engage in Your remembrance.”

He was really in pain and discomfort. Allāh *taʿālā* used to ask him every morning and evening: “O Ayyūb! How are you?” On hearing the affectionate inquiry about his health from his true Beloved, Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* used to go into an ecstasy. The joy which he experienced at hearing the morning call would continue until the evening. And the joy of the evening call would continue until the next morning. All the pain which he was experiencing would be forgotten on account of this joy.

The bounties which Allāh *taʿālā* is to give His righteous and pious servants in the Hereafter are bound to be given. Nonetheless, what He gives to them in this world is not much less. For example, I just related how Allāh *taʿālā* used to ask Hadrat Ayyūb *ʿalayhis salām* about his health. Imagine how enjoyable and pleasant that question is!

The seniors say that patience is limited in every situation and place, except when it comes to the Beloved – one cannot exercise patience at not having Him.

الصبر يحمد في مواطن كلها – إلا عليك فإنه مذموم

Patience is laudable everywhere, but not when it comes to You O Beloved, because then it is blameworthy.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Gulistān*:

> Wealth does not remain in the hands of free-minded people just as patience in the

heart of a lover and water in a sieve do not remain.

It is correct to say that the most enjoyable thing in this world is love. If it is for the Creator, then what more can we say! Allāh *taʿālā* created this world so that people love their Creator and Master.

The ʿulamā' relate the following Hadīth:

كُنْتُ كَنْزًا مَخْفِيًّا فَأَحْبَبْتُ أَنْ أُعْرَفَ فَخَلَقْتُ الْخَلْقَ[1]

[Allāh taʿālā said]: I was a hidden treasure. I wanted to be recognized, so I created the creation.

The scholars say that a Hadīth with the above words is not verified but its meaning is correct because Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ

I created jinn and man solely for My worship.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the words "My worship" as "so that they may recognize Me". And the word *ahbabtu* (I wanted, loved) is from the word *mahabbah* (love). We learn from this that love is initiated from Allāh's side.

All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were sent to this world to teach people how to recognize Allāh *taʿālā* and to enable them to love Him.

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is in itself compulsory and all other obligations are on account of this love because through it, it becomes easy to fulfil them. The

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[1] كشف الخفا ومزيل الالباس، ١٢١.

influences of the carnal self are put to an end, this is why it becomes even more necessary to acquire love.

The injunctions which Allāh *taʿālā* sent to this world contain orders and prohibitions. It was difficult on the self to carry out His orders and abstain from whatever He prohibited. This is why it interferes with man and tries to influence him. Allāh *taʿālā* created love to put an end to the interference of the self and to overpower it. When love gains the upper hand, the opposition and interference of the self come to an end. Allāh *taʿālā* has placed so much of power in love that if just one splash of it falls on the self, its rebelliousness is removed. Once the obstacle of the path is removed, worship becomes easy. Thus, the greatest benefit of love is that the rebellious self is made subservient.

Note: Glory to Allāh! It is a most beneficial theme which ought to be remembered. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Allāh confers high ranks through patience

The *Mathnawī Sharīf* relates the incident of a person who went to meet a saint. When he enquired at his house he was informed that he was not at home. In the process of informing him, the saint's wife was hurling verbal abuses at her husband. The person heard what she said. He became angry and said: "Are you speaking badly of our shaykh in our presence? If you are not benefiting from him, let it be. We are certainly benefiting from him, so we are not prepared to hear anything bad about him. Man has a carnal self within him which prompts him towards evil. I see you in the same light – you are living in the house of a saint but you haven't benefited from him in any way. You have bad thoughts about him."

The man responded to her verbal abuses in this way and left. He went out into the forest in search of the saint. He saw him approaching while sitting on a lion with a snake in his hand which he was using as a whip (this was a supernatural feat performed by him). The man thought to himself: “He is such a great saint yet look at what kind of wife he has!?” The saint was informed of the person’s thoughts, so he said from a distance: “You must not entertain any thoughts in your heart.” When he came near, the saint said to him: “Brother! This rank which you see in me is actually through her blessings. When I remained patient over her bad manners, Allāh *taʿālā* blessed me with this.”

It is solely due to Allāh’s wisdom that he brings together such spouses that the spiritual progress is dependent on the other. It takes true recognition to understand this and can only be fathomed by an ʿārif. An ignorant person falls into destruction on such occasions.

The wife of H̲ad̲rat Mirzā Jān Jānā *rah̲imahullāh* was extremely hot-tempered. On one occasion, H̲ad̲rat sent one of his Kābulī disciples to his house to ask how she was. He came to the house and inquired about her wellbeing. She responded by hurling abuses at H̲ad̲rat. The disciple returned to H̲ad̲rat who asked him: “Brother, what happened?” He replied: “She was saying many bad things about you. I became very angry. If she was not your wife I would have stabbed her with a dagger.” H̲ad̲rat said: “You are my disciple and you must be thinking that I have reached a certain rank [of spirituality]. Now listen! This rank which I received is because of my wife. I exercised patience over her harshness, so Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed me to this rank.”

There are many incidents of this nature – of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and the Auliyā’. These personalities make this the means to establish a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Just as gratitude over favours is a means of reaching Allāh *taʿālā*, so is patience over hardships and tragedies.

Patience and gratitude – two parts of īmān

Īmān is made up of two parts – patience and gratitude. It is a great feat to reach Allāh *taʿālā* through the path of gratitude, but it is much greater to reach Him through patience. This is because a person has to exercise patience over matters which are against his carnal self.

This is why we see that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were tested more through patience. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أشد الناس بلاء الأنبياء ثم الأولياء ثم الأمثل فالأمثل[1]

The Prophets are tested the most with hardships. Thereafter it is the Auliyā’ and then those who are closest to them in rank.

A Hadīth of *Tirmidhī Sharīf* states that a man is tested according to the level of his īmān.

The more the īmān the more the tests and tribulations. When a person’s īmān is weak, he is put through minor tests. The tests could be as regards a person’s sustenance, health or children. They could come in the form of a person’s wife as well.

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[1] فيض القدير شرح جامع الصغير، ج ١، ص ٥١٨.

There was a man who had a bond with Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. It seemed that his wife was ill-mannered. He wrote to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* on one occasion:

> I am neither permitted to cry nor beg. It is
> my wish to lose my breath and die.

He was a pious man who bore his wife's torments patiently. The carnal self of a pious man becomes suppressed and comes in line with him. However, his wife and children are generally not in line with him. Although his self is dead, his family is alive with its bad manners and intolerance.

The man who wrote to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was not harsh to his family. He must have considered Allāh's statement that there are many rewards in store for those who are patient. This is why he bore her torments.

Listen! If you have a relative living close by and he constantly torments and harms you, but you tolerate everything and do not become angry, then it is a sign of perfection in character. You will be rewarded tremendously in the Hereafter.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in his *Mathnawī*:

> There is nothing more bitter than being separated from You. Without Your refuge, there are challenges everywhere. Our possessions (body parts) are themselves the thieves of our possessions. Our own bodies are snatching away the garments of our life. In other words, our desires are the enemies of our spiritual treasure, and our hands and feet are eating us away. How can anyone protect his life (īmān) without Your sanctuary.

The actual enemy of man is his carnal self. A Hadīth states:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

As long as a person's self is not rectified, all his body parts will be subservient to it. In other words, it takes man on the very path which will lead to his destruction.

This is what Maulānā is referring to when he says: O Allāh! Turn me away from my evil destiny and evil orders. In other words, make my carnal self obedient to You. If it is going to be disobedient to me, it will separate me from You. It will cause me to act against Your orders, the consequence of which will be the Hell-fire. Just as there is Paradise for those who good, there is the Hell-fire for those who do bad. Entry into the Hell-fire will cause me to be far from You. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from it.

The Auliyā' aim to get close to Allāh *taʿālā*, this is why they become enemies of the carnal self. They strive to make their body parts subservient to Allāh *taʿālā*. Once they become obedient – i.e. instead of disobeying the Beloved they carry out His orders and abstain from His prohibitions – then the same body parts become beloved to the Auliyā'. It is only then that they chant [the couplets which were quoted previously]:

> People say that I am proud of my eyes. It is because I have beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

> conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

These personalities only feel proud after they have realized that they have made their body parts obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* and subservient to the Sunnat and Sharīʿat. In other words, the tongue has given up impermissible speaking, the eyes have given up looking at impermissible things, the ears are no longer listening to unlawful words, etc. In short, everything has become obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*. There can be no greater bounty in this abode of the world.

In the same vein I say to you that what can be a worse calamity then having a wife who is opposed to us? Having children who are opposed to us? And our own selves are opposed to us? May Allāh *taʿālā* give us refuge from this.

It is stated in a Hadīth that when it is the time for accounting of deeds on the day of Resurrection, a seal will be placed on the tongue. It will remain silent while the other body parts will speak. Each part with which a sin was committed will admit to that sin. The person will become astounded and ask: "What is happening!? Our own body parts are testifying against us!?" We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that there will be three presentations on the day of Resurrection. One will be of disputation which will be for the unbelievers. The other will be for offering excuses.[1] And the third in which the books of deeds will be cast aside.

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[1] In other words, a person will try to present his case before Allāh *taʿālā*, and offer excuses in the presence of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

Imām Ghazzālī *raḫimahullāh* says that something will be whispered into the ears of some people. When they hear it, they will fall down out of regret. The reason for whispering it in their ears is so that they are not humiliated in the presence of everyone. As for those who are bound to be humiliated, they will be interrogated publicly. Everyone will hear the interrogation.

Another scene of embarrassment will be when everyone will be standing before Allāh *taʿālā* and all their body parts will be testifying against them. They will feel so ashamed that they will fall down unconscious. The same unconsciousness will be a treatment for the removal of their regret. When they come back to their senses, their hearts and minds will be totally clear. Had they not fallen unconscious, the regret would have remained with them forever and ever.

There is life after this worldly life

I am relating all this to you to show you that the present life is not the only life. The Hereafter is bound to come, so be concerned about it.

If we have to die one day and the life of this world is bound to come to an end, we ought to fear the Hereafter and be worried about it. The hearts of the saints are also overwhelmed by fear. Consequently, they do not experience real enjoyment in the enjoyments of the world.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḫimahullāh* related about a saint who was going somewhere. On the way he saw a few young boys playing and laughing. He stopped and said: "O children! Listen! You are to die. You will be questioned in the grave. The accounting of deeds is yet to come. You will have

to cross the Pul S̲irāt̲. You still have to be presented before Allāh *taʿālā*. Yet you are laughing!?"

The boys must have certainly been affected by this admonishment. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* was most impressed by this admonishment of the saint and spoke highly of it.

This is the difference between the speech of the external 'ulamā' and the Sufis. If they were to give you a lengthy speech about the Hereafter it will not have so much of effect on you as these few words of the above-mentioned saint.

One saint was feeling thirsty so he asked for water. When the water was brought to him he refused it. The people asked him: "H̲ad̲rat, why are you not drinking the water when you yourself had asked for it?" He replied: "When the unbelievers ask for water in the Hell-fire, they will be given boiling water. This scene came to my mind, caused me to shudder, and my thirst and everything else disappeared."

The verse which came to his mind is the following:

وَنَادٰى أَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ أَصْحٰبَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَفِيْضُوْا عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ط قَالُوْآ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَّلَعِبًا وَّغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ج فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوْا لِقَآءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هٰذَا لا وَمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ.

The inhabitants of Hell will call out to the inhabitants of Paradise: "Pour a little water upon us or some of the sustenance which Allāh has given you." They will reply: "Allāh has barred both things from the unbelievers...Who made their religion [an object of] amusement and play, and whom the life of this world

deluded.” And so We shall forget them as they forgot the meeting of this day and as they rejected Our verses.[1]

Note: Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad ʿUthmānī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* explains the above verses in a very concise and clear manner. I quote his explanation here:

> Upon being rendered senseless and completely perturbed, the inmates of Hell will ask the inhabitants of Paradise thus: “We are burning [in Hell], please pour some water on us or give us some of the bounties which Allāh has set aside for you.” An answer will be given that these things are forbidden to the unbelievers. It is these very unbelievers who used to make the religion an object of play and amusement and used to exult in the pleasures of this world. Just as they did not even think about the Hereafter on account of their falling into the pleasures of the world, We will not even bother about them today. Just as they had rejected Our verses, We will refuse to accede to their requests today.[2]

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said that one of his friends used to read these lines quite often:

> O self! Discard all those actions which are unnecessary. Only do what you will need on the day of Resurrection.

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 50-51.

[2] *Tafsīr-e-ʿUthmānī*, p. 209.

Note: This is known as muhāsabah or introspection. It is essential on the path of rectification. The Sufis accord much importance to it.

A statement of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate this incident quite often. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed by a house of a Sahābī which was solidly built. His eyes fell on the house and he asked those around him as to whose house it was. The people informed him that it belongs to a certain person. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* continued silently. The next day the Sahābī came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and offered him salām. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* turned away without replying. The Sahābī noticed his change in attitude so he asked someone: "Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appears to be silent, what is the matter?" He replied: "I don't know anything apart from the fact that he passed by your house yesterday, looked at it and asked whose house it was."

The Sahābī immediately realized that his solidly built house was the cause of Rasūlullāh's displeasure. He got up immediately without asking Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, proceeded to his house and had it demolished. He did not go back to inform Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* of what he did. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed that way after some days and asked: "What happened to the house which was here?" The people informed him that the Sahābī whose house it was perceived Rasūlullāh's displeasure so he demolished it.

This is the type of love which I am speaking about. That is, a lover cannot bear the displeasure of his beloved. That Sahābī had total and absolute love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He must have thought to himself that what is the use of a house on account of which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* has turned away from me? A thousand similar houses can be sacrificed for the pleasure of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The condition of a true lover is as described in the following couplet:

> You are asking for separation which is most bitter. So let me say this much, you can ask for anything else but don't ask for separation.

I am speaking on a most essential theme to you people. Listen to it attentively and consider this to be an ideal occasion. We might not get such a time again. Do whatever needs to be done now.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the amount of pain and affection with which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is advising us. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us who are associated to him to practise so that his soul may be pleased. Āmīn. (compiler)

A scholar related to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* an incident about a pious ʿālim of Gujarat. He was asked to go to Gujarat through divine inspiration. He proceeded and settled down in an orchard outside a city. He was a good flute player, and this is what he used to do. People from all over used to assemble to listen to him (people are generally attracted to these things very quickly). He continued in this way and the love of the people towards him began increasing by the day. He too realized that they

now love him so much that they will not be prepared to leave him. He then exposed who he really was and began speaking from the Qur'ān and Hadīth to them. Only then did they realize who he really was.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said that Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* listened attentively to this incident and did not make any objections to it. In fact, he was quite impressed. (compiler)

I am relating to you the methods of the Sufis. Look at how they preserved Dīn and bore severe hardships for it. They understood that if the internal self is not protected, Dīn will wither away and the original thing will disappear.

The period up to the time of the Tābiʿīn was a good one. But after that, these personalities realized that Dīn is in danger. This is why they bore intense hardships and dangers for its preservation. They went to the extent of sacrificing their lives for it.

There has always been a group for the preservation of Dīn

In every era there was a group which took care of the Dīn. When misguidance increased, they combated it with all their force. However, in our times, misguidance has gone to such a level that if there is an ʿālim who appears like one, worships Allāh *taʿālā* and does not do anything against the Sharīʿat, people do not consider him to be a saint. But if a person removes his clothing and does not have even a distant relationship with the Sharīʿat, they feel he is a saint. Just look at the level of deviation! Whereas the Sufis respected the Sharīʿat themselves and made others to do the same so that people understand the sanctity of the Sharīʿat. Even if their deeds are less, as long as their īmān is set right it will be to their advantage.

The Sufis felt that people would not go to the level of discarding salāh, fasting and other external acts of worship. Yes, they understood that people will certainly be lethargic towards matters of the heart which were brought by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why they focussed on the internal self and strove to preserve it. But now we see that in addition to people's disregard for the internal self, they are increasingly discarding the external acts of Dīn. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen! The basis of Sufism revolves around upholding the sanctity of the Sharīʿat. The actions, spiritual conditions and statements of the Sufis all testify to the high regard which they had for the Sharīʿat.

A woman asked Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* the following question: "The government has lamps on the roads [so that people can see the way]. Is it permissible to spin cotton in the light of those lamps?" When Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* heard this question, he sat up attentively and thought to himself that this woman appears to be from a respectable family. He asked: "Who are you?" She replied: "I am the sister of Bishr Hāfī." He replied: "It is not permissible for the sister of Bishr Hāfī to do this." What he meant was that it was against taqwā and piety for a woman whose brother was such a great saint. The sister must live on the level of her brother as regards piety.

Note: We learn from this that a different rule applies to the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. Together with the fatwā, they must take due consideration of taqwā. (compiler)

An incident

Hadrat Bishr Hāfī *rahimahullāh* was a very great Sufi. He used to walk barefooted out of respect for Allāh

taʿālā. Allāh *taʿālā* sent inspiration to him saying: "At present there is no one more beloved to Me than you." Allāh *taʿālā* had instructed the birds not to sit in his path. Consequently, when he walked on any path, it was clean. The reason for doing this is that because he was so particular about walking barefooted for Allāh's sake, Allāh *taʿālā* did not want his feet to get dirty with impurities.

On one occasion, a person saw some excreta on the path which Hadrat Bishr Hāfī *rahimahullāh* normally took. The man concluded that he has passed away. When he inquired, his conclusion proved to be correct.

People accepted the Sufis on account of their work. In other words, they filled their hearts with affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*, developed His love in their hearts and remained engrossed in His remembrance. This is why people had faith in them and obeyed them.

A saint came across a watch. He took it in his hand and continued looking at it until the next morning. He had truly recognized Allāh *taʿālā* so his mind went to the Creator or the thought must have crossed his mind thus: Look at how meticulous this watch is in carrying out its job. It is doing the work which it is supposed to do with full focus. Allāh *taʿālā* also created a watch of the heart within us. How sad that it is negligent in carrying out its work. He continued observing the watch and carried on thinking in this way.

On one occasion, Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* read the following verse in the ʿishā salāh.

فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَّرَهُ، وَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَّرَهُ.

Whoever does an atom's weight of good shall see it. Whoever does an atom's weight of evil shall see it.[1]

He was overcome by a special spiritual condition. All the people completed their salāh and left, but Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* was holding his beard and crying. He continued repeating those verses the entire night, and was saying: "O Allāh! Have mercy on Your servant, Nuʿmān, and pardon him."

These are incidents from the lives of true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*. When I related these points in some other place, the people there said to me that I have explained to them the fundamental reality. I said to them: "Brothers! This is a very difficult subject, but it becomes easy through examples."

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was teaching Hadīth and the subject was on aspects of Rasūlullāh's life. Hadrat quoted a Hindi couplet and screamed loudly. All the students went unconscious, their books got closed, and Hadrat remained sitting silently. When the students recovered, he said: "This is how we teach Hadīth." In other words, with feeling and emotion. In this way we convey the students to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

There is another incident about Hadrat Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which I heard from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. He said: I went from Kānpūr to Ganj Murādābād to meet Hadrat. He received me with much love and ordered food from his house. There was a bowl of pulse and rotīs. Hadrat came close and asked: "What is this?" I replied: "Hadrat, it is pulse and rotīs." He struck me

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[1] Sūrah az-Zalzalah, 99: 7-8.

on my shoulders and screamed out aloud. He then said: "O how wonderful! It is pulse and rotīs! Glory to Allāh!" He added: "You are a Maulwī! You must be knowing that the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* used to stay hungry for several meals at a time." In this way, Hadrat created the value of Allāh's favours and bounties in my heart.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* must have thought to himself that this is an 'ālim who must be in the habit of eating more fancy foods, and would probably not like the pulse and rotīs. He created in Hadrat Thānwī's heart respect and value for this food by adopting this approach.

We cannot create any impression on the Muslims. If there is any way of doing it, it is by relating to them incidents from the lives of the senior saints. Relate to them the stories of the Sufis and see how Allāh's love develops in their hearts. Every person is not on the same level in Dīn. Some are higher than others. Even then, whatever little you get will be from this path.

The scholars have made a great contribution by collating the statements of the saints. The benefit of this has become widespread and common. It is therefore necessary to read the statements of the saints and to listen to them. The more they are proliferated, the more Allāh's mercy will descend.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (5)

I have been talking about love for Allāh *taʿālā* for several days. The ʿulamā' say that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is of two types. One is compulsory and the other is desirable.

Compulsory love is what prompts a person to carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions, and enables him to be content with Allāh's decree. If a person is involved in disobedience by committing a ḫarām act or by leaving out an obligation, it will be because he has a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why he gave preference to the desires of his carnal self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

This is the explanation of ʿulamā', and they are explaining it very cautiously. Look at what a clear and sensible explanation it is which can be understood by the learned and the laity. It is their right to explain it like this because they are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is compulsory to carry out Allāh's orders. For example, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ

Establish s̱alāh and pay zakāh.

To have that much of love which enables you to carry out this order is also compulsory. In the same way, it is compulsory for you to be happy with Allāh's decree for you. If a person does not have love, he will be displeased with many of Allāh's decrees and will start complaining.

I am trying to explain this point but people are not paying heed. Let me explain an example to you. After Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* departed from this world, H̲ad̲rat ʿAlī *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* expressed his grief as follows: "Love for you demands that I cry so much that the fat of my entire body melts and flows out from my eyes. At the same time, you taught us the lesson of patience. This is why I will give preference to your order over my desire, and I will remain patient."

He conveyed the message in a most unique and unprecedented way. Sometimes we experience certain situations where it is most difficult to exercise patience. However, a person is able to do it on account of love. Up to now we had been assuming that compulsory duties refer to compulsory acts of worship only. In other words, we know that it is compulsory to perform s̲alāh, to fast, and so on. Despite knowing all this, we are negligent of the thing which is the essence of everything. That is, Allāh's love. Although it is compulsory, it is generally not in our minds. If we do not even think about it, how will we ever bother about acquiring it? This is what is happening nowadays.

Now listen to what I have to say to you.

If a person carries out Allāh's orders and abstains from His prohibitions, we will say that he has love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is also one level of love. A jurist will pass a verdict that this person has love, he affirms Allāh *taʿālā*; and that he has love even though the special condition and zeal of a lover may not be seen in him.

Those who practise on the Sharīʿat, carry out its orders and abstain from its prohibitions are lovers and saints in the sight of the Sharīʿat. But we notice that people do not regard them as saints. If they see a liberal thinking naked person, they follow him and

think he is a saint. They will say about him: “He performs his s̲alāh in Makkah.” One man gave a good answer to such a claim. He asked: “Then why does he defecate here in India? Is India the place for his backside?”

Let me use an example to explain the point that carrying out an order is a proof of love. There is a very cold wind blowing. A person gets up from his warm bed, performs wud̲ū’ with cold water and fulfils Allāh’s obligation [of s̲alāh]. All this could not have been done without love. It is love alone which made these difficulties easy.

There was a saint who would go and perform wud̲ū’ in the ocean when it was bitterly cold.

When it was winter and raining, H̲ad̲rat Shaykh ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh* used to pay even more attention to his wud̲ū’ and s̲alāh. This is why it is said that performing the fajr and ‘ishā s̲alāhs is an indication of sincerity. There are certain actions which indicate to a person’s internal self. The ‘ulamā’ have delved into this theme and they say:

الظاهر عنوان الباطن

The internal self is fathomed from the external self.

A H̲adīth states that the fajr and ‘ishā s̲alāhs are very difficult for the hypocrites. Thus, not performing these two s̲alāhs is a sign of hypocrisy. Understand this well. If you feel that you can discard acting on the Sharī‘at and still make progress, then this is not going to happen. Any believer who progressed spiritually did it solely by acting on the orders of the Sharī‘at.

An incident of Hadrat Uways

Hadrat Uways experienced the era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but did not get to meet him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had sent an overcoat for him. He sent a message to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informing him: "My heart is restless and yearning to meet you but my mother is old and weak; she needs me to attend to her. And I received this order from you that we have to serve our parents. This is why I am subjugating my love to the Sharīʿat."

This was true love. He gave preference to following the order of his beloved over the desire of his heart. (May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with this quality. Āmīn)

I see you people inviting ʿulamāʾ, asking them to deliver talks, conducting assemblies and so on. It shows that you cannot get enough of the ʿulamāʾ, that is why you invite them. This Dīn belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. Anyone who helps His Dīn will receive the help of Allāh *taʿālā*.

لا تزال طائفة من أمتي منصورين، لا يضرهم من خذلهم، حتى تقوم الساعة.

A group from my ummat will always be helped. Those who try to disgrace them will not be able to harm them in any way. This will continue until the day of Resurrection. (Tirmidhī)

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes:

> If a person tries to blow off a lamp which Allāh *taʿālā* lit, he will burn his beard. Thus, even if this world is raged by a

tempest, the lamps of the close servants of Allāh *taʿālā* will not get extinguished.

There is no era which will be devoid of the Ahlullāh and people of the Sharīʿat. Because it is not easy to practise on the Sharīʿat, people keep away from the people of the Sharīʿat. A youngster came to me and said: "Do you know why people do not come to you?" I replied: "Tell me, why don't they come?" He said: "The fact of the matter is that people are immersed in h̲arām actions. They feel that if they come to you, you will cause them to give up those sins, and it is not easy for them to give them up. This is why they don't come. They feel that if they don't want to go to a certain village, why should they ask for directions to it?" I said: "I also know why they don't come. What are you going to teach me? They are people of the carnal self, they want to live a free life. Following their desires has seized them. This is why they don't want to come towards Dīn. However, in this same world there are many seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* who are searching for places like this and go to them."

The fate of a king and a worshipper

It is mentioned in the *Gulistān* that people saw a king in Paradise and a worshipper in Hell. They were surprised because their destinies are different from what their external selves portrayed. They learnt that in his quest for Allāh *taʿālā*, the king used to go to meet the saints. He was therefore treated according to his internal self. On the other hand, the dervish was a dervish externally but a seeker of this world in reality. He was also treated according to his internal self.

There are many injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* whose fulfilment is obligatory. In the same way, there are many sins. Some are major and others are minor.

Man has to be mindful of everything. In other words, he must carry out the orders and abstain from the prohibitions. This is the Dīn which has to be practised upon.

A Hadīth states that when you see a person frequenting the masjid then testify to his īmān. After all, there must be something in him which is causing him to be so punctual. That thing can be nothing other than the love of Allāh *taʿālā*.

I am demonstrating to you that carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions is also a type of love; and it is a major level of love. If we are able to take care of this throughout our lives, it is called istiqāmat – steadfastness. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اَنْ لَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ.

Surely those who said: "Our Lord is Allāh", and then remain steadfast on this, angels descend upon them [saying]: "Do not fear, nor grieve! Listen to the glad tiding of Paradise which you were promised."[1]

They reached this level of steadfastness because they used to carry out the orders and abstain from the prohibitions to the extent that it became their second nature. Consequently, they generally cannot do anything against this. This is another level of love.

Another level of love is when a person occasionally fails in carrying out obligations or misses them, or commits some of the prohibitions but he is remorseful, he is not pleased with this condition, he

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 30.

earnestly wants this condition not to prevail, he strives in this regard but is not able to come out of it as yet.

This is also a level of love although it is lower than the first one. We will refer to him as a mujāhid (one who is striving) and affirm that he has love as well. His displeasure at committing a sin and his internal disapproval of it is, after all, because of love.

A Hadīth states that a believer can commit a sin and so does a hypocrite. But there is a difference between the two. The example of a hypocrite committing a sin is like a fly sitting on his nose and he waves it away. In other words, he doesn't bother much about it and it does not weigh heavily on his heart. But when a believer commits a sin, he feels as though a mountain has fallen on him. He feels a very heavy burden on him. He has carnal desires in him, this is why he committed the sin. But because he also has īmān, he is displeased with himself. Sometimes a believer experiences so much of anguish over a sin that it becomes a means for elevation of his status.

A man was going to the masjid for salāh, while people were leaving the masjid after having performed the salāh. He asked: "Is the congregation over?" When they replied in the affirmative, he took a deep breath. In other words, he expressed his sorrow at missing the congregation. A man heard this deep breath of his and said: "You can take my salāh and all my other salāhs, and give me this one breath of sorrow which you took." The man refused and said: "Let us continue in this way, I am not ready to make any exchange."

Did you see the extent of his disappointment at having missed one salāh with congregation! This was on account of love for Allāh *taʿālā*. If he did not have any

love for Allāh's worship – i.e. the congregational salāh – he would not have expressed such disappointment.

Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* was from among the senior Auliyā'. He had a man who lived in his neighbourhood. When Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* passed away, some people saw him in their dream and asked him how he fared. He replied: "I have been forgiven, but a certain man who was my neighbour is higher than me in rank." When he was asked how this happened, he replied: "He was a family man with a wife and children. He used to be busy earning for them, but would always say: 'O Allāh! If I too had the opportunity I would have worshipped You like Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham.' Allāh *taʿālā* loved this wish of his." He was given rewards equal to the actions of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh*, and a separate reward for his own actions. This is why he was on a higher rank.

Did you see! This is another level of love – that a person is never happy with the sins which he commits. He will also be included among the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* even though he will not be on the same level as the others. A sinner is not maʿsūm (divinely protected from sin) but at the same time he is not pleased with sinning. When a believer who has Allāh's love in his heart sees that his carnal self is interfering in his demands to act on Allāh's love, he becomes an enemy of his self. When he finds that his self is becoming lazy in Allāh's path, he punishes it and discards the wants and desires of the self.

This is why I said that this man is a mujāhid and he is included among those who love Allāh *taʿālā*. After all, the real path is that of carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. And it is necessary to remove obstacles that come on the path to Allāh

taʿālā. When the Ahlullāh have to bear hardships, they find them most enjoyable.

The carnal self is subdued by love for Allāh *taʿālā.* The carnal self is also rectified through anger. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that if a person has excessive anger in him, it is necessary for him to treat it. In the same way, if there is a dearth of anger in a person, it is necessary for him to develop some anger in him. This is because many tasks are accomplished through anger. If a person cannot get angry at his carnal self, he will not be able to rectify it. When a person seeks his rectification, he is sorrowed by his evil condition. In fact, he gets angry at his carnal self and the latter is rectified through his anger.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* gives the example of a hunting dog. When a hunter indicates to his dog in the direction of a hunt, the dog runs towards it. In the same way, when the self carries out its desires, the Ahlullāh impose anger on it. This anger is for Allāh's sake and is therefore not prohibited. If you were not able to be angry at your self, how will it be rectified!?

Ignorant people are destroyed by continuous anger. In the process, they have destroyed their worldly peace and tranquillity. They will stomach this anger but if we have to scold or reprimand them for their own rectification, they immediately tell us that anger is harām. Whereas you have already learnt that Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said that anger is necessary for the rectification of the self. Now this could be for your own self or the self of others.

I was saying to you that those who have not freed themselves totally from the demands of the carnal self are also included among the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā.* This is because they are sorrowful over the defect

which is in the self and they are worried about its rectification.

The company of a defective person

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* said that the most harmful thing is the company of a defective person. A defective person is one who has no worry about his perfection. If a person is worried about his perfection, then even if he hasn't reached perfection as yet, he is focussed in that direction. The company of such a person is not harmful because when he has this sorrow in his heart, he will create the same sorrow and concern in the hearts of others. The fundamental thing is to have that sorrow and concern. Through it man can be rectified and through it he can succeed. A poet rightly said:

> O sorrow! Why are you standing at the door? O my brother and friend! Come in because your place is in my heart.

A person used to say that when he sees the word "love" written anywhere, he thinks to himself: Why is it written there? It ought to be inside my heart.

Love makes the path easy

Love makes the path easy and hardships become bearable. A person does not bother about the criticism of people because his sole objective and desire is to obey the order of the Creator and to please Him.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* used to listen to samāʿ. A muhtasib (a government appointed official who ensures people are following the Sharīʿat) wrote from Delhi to say that he is going to come soon. The Shaykh stopped listening to samāʿ. The people began speaking among themselves and

said that the Shaykh stopped samāʿ because he is scared of the muhtasib. Someone informed the Shaykh that people are criticizing him. He said: "Brother! We are Muslims and our forefathers were Muslims. We heard one order of the Sharīʿat and we accepted it. What is there to criticize?"

Do not consider this to be a "dry" topic. You will experience a few difficulties in the beginning, but once a person continues in his efforts to acquire knowledge and practice, he will experience "freshness". The difficulty which is experienced remains for as long as there is no love in the self. The self will fight him and he will continue fighting back until he is victorious.

I told you just now that such a person is referred to as a mujāhid. If he continues in his battle against his carnal self and dies in the process, he will die as a mujāhid in Allāh's cause.

This is what the Sufis teach and they strive to teach their disciples to practise on their knowledge so that a person reaches Allāh *taʿālā* and receives salvation.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said in a lecture that there was a man who used to live in Makkah Mukarramah for six months and in Madīnah Munawwarah for six months. When he used to come to Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* [in Makkah], Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to quote this couplet to him:

> How fortunate is that person who lives in the house of Allāh for some time and in the house of Rasūlullāh for some time!

On one occasion, the Dār al-Hadīth of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband was being constructed so Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was invited to deliver a lecture. In his lecture, he quoted the above couplet

and said to the students that sometimes they will go to the masjid to perform salāh and sometimes they will go to the Dār al-Hadīth to study Hadīth. When Hadrat applied the words "house of Rasūlullāh" to the Dār al-Hadīth, the 'ulamā' who were present were most impressed and expressed their approval.

I am explaining to you the topic of love in the language of the 'ulamā'. The 'ulamā' are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* and they will be standing in the front row on the day of Resurrection. They will arrive like rain with their followers. The reason why I am saying these things to you is that if you do not regard knowledge of the Sharī'at as sanctified, then the Sharī'at will be discarded and cast aside. If a person cannot practise, he should at least acquire īmān. That is, he must at least believe that the Sharī'at is the truth. This too is a great bounty.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (6)

The ‘ulamā’ say that like s̱alāh and fasting, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. Previously I quoted a text from *Fatẖ al-Bārī* to you:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدره.

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person towards carrying out Allāh’s orders, abstaining from His disobedience and being pleased with His decree.

The author says further on:

فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، أو قدم الهوى على المحبوب الحقيقي فهو دليل غلبة النفس وعدم غلبة الحب الإلهي.

If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over the Real Beloved. This is proof that the carnal self has overpowered him and that Allāh’s love is not overpowering him.

I say that if you give preference to the order of your self over the order of the Beloved, then we can

rephrase it and say that carnal desire has been given preference over Allāh's love. The person has given victory to his carnal self and carnal desire, and defeated the love of Allāh *taʿālā*. This happened because he fell short in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. He left out an obligatory order – love for Allāh *taʿālā* – and chose to do a harām act according to the demand of his carnal self. In the process, he disobeyed the injunctions of the Beloved. This is undoubtedly proof that the carnal self is victorious while love for Allāh *taʿālā* is defeated.

The 'ulamā' are saying that the love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. You people know that salāh and fasting are compulsory, but you probably do not consider love for Allāh *taʿālā* to be compulsory whereas it is also compulsory. You will be questioned about it in the Hereafter just as you will be questioned about salāh and fasting.

People perform salāh and fast, but they have no knowledge about the fundamental thing. So listen! You will be questioned about it on the day of Resurrection. We love our wealth, we love our wives and children; but we do not love Allāh *taʿālā*! How is that!

This is a beautiful explanation given by the 'ulamā'. This is really the greatness of the 'ulamā'. The Auliyā' also explain it. You enjoy their explanation but you probably do not understand it. The fact is that the Auliyā' have a more ecstatic effect which you enjoy. They do not explain it like the 'ulamā' because the latter are the heirs of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They have the responsibility of conveying and preserving the Sharīʿat. The Hadīth mention lofty ranks and merits for the 'ulamā' who preserve the

Sharīʿat. This is why they speak in a manner which is understood by all, and easy to practise.

Listen! The ʿulamā' are saying that compulsory love has that rank which prompts a person towards carrying out orders. Allāh *taʿālā* made s̲alāh, fasting, piety, purity, etc. compulsory. Love is the thing which prompts a person to carry out all these acts and to abstain from sins. It is also made compulsory because it is what leads a person on this path. Furthermore, it is the same love which destroys the worst thief on the path, viz. the carnal self. It is called a thief because it stops a person from performing s̲alāh, paying zakāh, listening to the ʿulamā', and every other type of good. If there is anything which can kill the carnal self, it is love. All the Ahlullāh are unanimous in this regard. The fact that the self takes a person to a place where he does not even want to go to is enough to label the self as evil. At such a time, it makes man to commit an evil which itself considers to be evil at other times. When Allāh *taʿālā* created desires in man and laid down this test that the one who abstains from them will be rewarded, He also created a certain thing in man through which he can combat it, and that thing is love.

A creation devoid of desires was already present, that is the angels. Allāh *taʿālā* willed to create a creation from which the test of piety is taken in this world. As long as the self is victorious and love is vanquished, man is at the hands of his self. But when, through Allāh's inspiration, drops of love fall on the self, love gradually gains the upper-hand. Subsequently, the self acts on the mere indications of love.

The carnal self was so rebellious that it used to rationalize the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and offer various types of excuses. It would not allow man to

continue on the right path. However, when the same self becomes obedient, it becomes so obedient as though someone has placed a nose-ring in its nose. In other words, it becomes totally obedient and submissive. A poet says:

> Even if you fasten me down with 200 chains, I will break them unless you tie me down with the lock of hair of my beloved (I will remain tied down with even a single strand of hair of my beloved).

The poet is explaining the effect of love. Love has such a powerful effect that the lover does not have the power to do anything against the beloved.

People come and ask me, how should we explain to our fellow Muslims so that it can have some impact on them? I give only one reply. I say, you must speak on themes which create yearning for Allāh's love and fear of the Hereafter. If you do this, you can hope for their rectification.

Listen! Another reason why love is compulsory is that it is a right of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* is the Real Beloved. He possesses excellence, beauty and gifting. This is why it is right to love Him. If a person has shortcomings in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be accountable on the day of Resurrection. He will be asked: "You loved everyone else, but you did not love Me!?" Just as it is necessary to love Allāh's creation – e.g. one's children, wife, relatives, etc. – it is necessary to love Allāh *taʿālā* who is the Creator, Master and Nourisher. I am speaking to you in the language of the ʿulamā'. The ʿulamā' have explained all these things but the people who come here frequently do not learn anything.

Now listen to the explanation of the Sufis. One of them says:

> I am proud of my eyes because they beheld Your beauty. I am falling over my feet because they have conveyed me to Your alley. I am kissing my hands repeatedly because they held on to You and pulled me towards You.

Look! First of all these personalities safeguard their hands, feet, ears, eyes, etc. from all matters which are against the Sharīʿat so that they do not become attached to the non-beloved. If they do commit anything against the Sharīʿat, they express anger over it. However, once they make them obedient, and all these body parts become subservient, these personalities start loving their body parts as well. They think to themselves that it is these body parts which conveyed them to the house of the Beloved and became the means to His proximity. This is why they are proud of their body parts. Had their body parts not been obedient to them, then instead of leading them to Allāh *taʿālā*, they would have attacked and misled them. Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says:

> Our possessions (body parts) are themselves the thieves of our possessions. Our own bodies are snatching away the garments of our life.

It is these very body parts through which the Ahlullāh reach Allāh *taʿālā* and the flagrant and immoral sinners are conveyed to the Hell-fire. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from the Hell-fire. Āmīn.

Love is a right of Allāh

People have rights and responsibilities towards each other. You people come here to me. You are Muslims and I am a Muslim. We therefore have rights over each other. In the same way, there are certain rights which are due to Allāh *taʿālā*. We have to worry about fulfilling them.

Knowledge of the plots of the self

Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said that it is obligatory to know the plots of the carnal self. In the same way, it is obligatory to subjugate it. The love of Allāh *taʿālā* becomes obligatory for the fulfilment of this obligation because the self is subjugated by love. The more the love, the more the self will be subjugated. If love is perfect, rectification of the self will become perfect. If it is less, it will decrease accordingly to the extent that it can become non-existent. The essence of love is to get lost in the beloved. Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Maktūbāt*:

> The essence of love is to obliterate yourself in the presence of the Beloved, and to lose all desires. If not, the love will be defective.[1]

I related an incident to you and I am relating it again. There is no harm in repetition. Themes which are necessary have to be repeated. Those who did not hear it will hear it now, those who heard it will hear it again.

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[1] *Maktūbāt Yaʿqūbīyyah*, p. 14.

I was sitting in some place with several people, when a man who was quite jovial read the following couplet in a very beautiful tone:

> If I sacrificed myself for Him, then what is so great about that! I had just one transaction with Him, and no transaction with the rest of the world.

Another person who was sitting there was so overcome by this couplet that he went into an ecstasy and screamed out in a loud voice. It seemed as though the roof will fall. He had obliterated himself completely for Allāh *taʿālā* and this couplet applied to him. This is why it had this effect on him and he screamed.

When Allāh's love is embedded in a person's heart, it prompts him to carry out His orders and abstain from His prohibitions. It overpowers Shayṯān and the carnal self. It seizes them in such a way that it does not allow the person to do anything against the Beloved. It is not possible for love for Allāh *taʿālā* to be in the heart and a person disobeys Him at the same time. This is what the 'ulamā' of Dīn are saying. But the situation has changed. In other words, there is love but no compliance.

A person was reading the following couplet and swaying from side to side:

> I am a slave of love, I have nothing to do with servitude.

When I asked him what it meant, he could not explain it to me. Thus, he was merely emulating people of spiritual ecstasy while he was totally devoid of it. This is nothing but ostentation.

When Allāh's love enters a person's heart and he fulfils His orders and practises on the Sharīʿat brought

by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he cannot be devoid of love for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

A person meets Allāh through salāh

Listen! This is not a dry topic. There was a man in Allāhābād who was misguided. Allāh *taʿālā* guided him, he chose Dīn and went to perform salāh in a masjid. His friend went to his house in the meantime and asked for him. His children informed the friend that their father was gone to the masjid. The friend waited for him. When he returned, the friend mocked at him and asked: "What is all this that you have started?" He replied: "Do not get into those matters. If you want to understand anything, I am prepared to exchange views with you. Either I will convince you or you will convince me." The friend said: "Brother, I also performed many salāhs but I did not get anything."

One of my associates related this incident to me because he knew the man. I said, his friend is wrong when he says that you do not get anything in salāh and fasting. I have received. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat Khwājah Muʿīn ad-Dīn Ajmerī *rahimahullāh* received, Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* received. But what you are referring to about not receiving (i.e. wealth and riches), they received that as well. Just today a person came and gave me so many gifts. People used to constantly send gifts to Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*. These things are very little [compared to the vast spiritual treasures which they receive].

The Ahlullāh get Allāh's pleasure

The Ahlullāh get Allāh's pleasure by virtue of their love for Him. They get His pleasure and proximity. They receive Paradise. They experience tranquillity. Allāh *taʿālā* enables them to perform supernatural feats. How can you say they get nothing? If you did not get anything then you should ask yourself why you did not get it? But you cannot negate the fact that others received. I do not know what he means when he says that you do not receive anything from obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*. A person receives the treasure of salāh from salāh. Can this be regarded as insignificant? May Allāh *taʿālā* give us understanding. Āmīn.

A Deputy Sāhib used to say to his wife: "Why do you perform salāh? What do you get from salāh?" The poor woman could not give him an answer. When Hadrat Maulānā heard about it he said: If I was in her place I would have said: "I get salāh." The reason for saying this is that a person can only ask for a thing when he chooses the means for asking for it, and the means is not the objective. For example, if you are walking to a certain place, your walking is not the objective; your objective is your destination to which you are walking. A person can ask: "What will you get from your walking?" You can reply to him: "I am going to a certain place to listen to a lecture, or I will reach home." On the other hand, eating food which is an objective in itself, you cannot ask about it: Why are you eating? What will you get from it? In the same way, Allāh's worship is compulsory and Allāh's love is compulsory. The fulfilment of this obligation is the objective. It is therefore most foolish to ask, what do you get from salāh? However, because you have no value and appreciation for this point, you will not

understand it. Therefore listen to what you consider to be “receiving”.

There was a youngster who used to go frequently to Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. When his mother noticed him spending a lot of time with him, she brought him to Hadrat and requested that he keep him in the khānqāh. He is doing nothing at home, at least he will learn something in Hadrat’s company. The boy began living with Hadrat. His mother would come to visit him occasionally. One day she noticed that her son had become quite thin, and he was eating chickpeas. When she looked on the other side, she saw Hadrat eating chicken and rice. She complained and said: “Do you think I left my son with you so that he eats chickpeas while you eat chicken and rice!?”

It was a tricky situation. In order to make her understand, Hadrat brought together the chicken bones which were lying in his plate and said: “Come to life with the permission of Allāh.” The chicken came to life, made a cackling sound and ran off. Hadrat turned to the woman and said: “When your son reaches this rank, he will eat chicken and rice. For now, he will have to continue eating chickpeas.”

Note: This was a karāmat of Hadrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh*. We know that the supernatural feats of the Auliyā’ are genuine. *Sharh al-ʿAqā’id* states:

كرامات الأولياء حقّ

The supernatural feats of the Auliyā’ are true.

(compiler)

Now listen further! Another thing which a believer receives in this world is peace and tranquillity of the

heart. In the very beginning of the Qur'ān Allāh *ta'ālā* speaks of good actions, and then says:

أُولٰئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

These people are on guidance from their Lord and they are the ones who will be successful.[1]

Allāh *ta'ālā* mentions two favours for those who have the qualities as described in the verses before. One favour is for this world and the other is for the Hereafter. The favour for the Hereafter is success in the Hereafter. The worldly favour is to be on guidance, due to which a person receives peace and tranquillity. Tranquillity of the heart is undoubtedly a great bounty of this world.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said that he understood the tafsīr of this verse while on a journey. He relates: I boarded a train from Sahāranpūr to go to Lucknow. There was another person in the same coach whom I knew but could not speak to because of the crowd. When the train left and the crowd lessened, I asked him: "Where are you going?" He replied: "I am going to Meerut." I said to him: "It is possible for you to go to Meerut but this train is going to Lucknow." He said: "O I see, are you going to Lucknow?" I replied: "Yes." The man became quite distressed. I said: "There is nothing to worry. The train does not stop before Rarkī station. When it stops there, you must get off, take a train to Sahāranpūr and proceed to Meerut from there."

This is how I understood the words "on guidance from the Lord" from this incident: I was still very far from

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 5.

Lucknow, but I was at peace with myself because I knew that the train which I have boarded is going to Lucknow. On the other hand, although my acquaintance was near to Meerut, he was worried because he realized that the train in which he is, is taking him further away from Meerut. From this we learn that to be on guidance is in itself a source of immense tranquillity. And when man is not on guidance, he remains uneasy and distressed.

A saint used to say that if the kings only came to know of the [spiritual] treasure which we have, they would have attacked us. A person who is guided by Allāh *taʿālā* continually receives peace and tranquillity in his heart. No matter what condition he may be in, because he is on guidance he feels as though someone is constantly consoling him.

To be content with the decree of Allāh *taʿālā* is one of the things which love for Allāh *taʿālā* creates. In this world we experience good things and bad conditions. If a person is pleased under all conditions and does not complain even in his heart, then this is a great bounty. However, this too cannot be obtained without love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

فمن وقع في معصية من فعل محرم أو ترك واجبٍ، فلتقصيره في محبة الله حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب

If a person commits an act of disobedience by committing a prohibited act or leaving out an obligation, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh taʿālā. This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved.

I say that the committing of an unlawful act or leaving out of an obligation is a defect according to the

Sharīʿat, and it stems from a defect in love. The first error of man is that he abandoned love. When he discards love, he commits sins. This is when he gives preference to the desire of the carnal self over love of the Beloved.

When the author of *Fat<u>h</u> al-Bārī* said: "If a person commits an act of disobedience…" he is using it as a basis to show that it is love which prompts a person to fulfil orders and abstain from prohibitions. If a person commits an unlawful action or leaves out an obligation, it will be a proof that he is not a true lover. This is because he gave preference to the desires of his self. The author explains this by saying:

حيث قدم هوى نفسه على أحكام المحبوب، أو قدم الهوى على المحبوب الحقيقي فهو دليل غلبة النفس وعدم غلبة الحب الإلهي.

This is because he gave preference to the desire of his self over the injunctions of the Beloved. He gave preference to desire over the Real Beloved. This is proof that the carnal self has overpowered him and that Allāh's loves is not overpowering him.

When love establishes itself in the heart, the īmān of a believer helps him and says: "Carry out the orders." The carnal self says: "Discard the orders, and do such and such act." Thus, when a person commits the prohibited, it is as though he gave preference to the demand of his self over the order of Allāh *taʿālā*. The Sharīʿat orders that man must obliterate his desires. When man gains control of his desires, he overwhelms them gradually until they come to an end and the carnal self is obliterated. On the other hand, if the carnal self controls him just once, its strength increases until it eventually takes complete control and love is defeated. It is as though there is a

continuous battle between the self and love until one vanquishes the other.

Intrusion of the carnal self

I will relate a few examples which demonstrate the intrusion of the self.

(1)

One Maulānā Sāhib was travelling by train. He needed to take a compulsory bath in the morning. He was quite worried when the time of salāh arrived. It was a cold and windy day. There was no place to take a bath. You can well imagine how much of laziness the self displays at such a time. He thinks to himself that he will make qadā of the salāh. We see our youngsters today finding it more difficult to perform wudū' and ghusl than to perform salāh. This is why they don't perform salāh. There are very few people who will prove their mettle in situations like this. The Maulānā Sāhib must have experienced a similar intrusion. However, the love for Allāh *ta'ālā* and consequently, the concern to carry out His order, overpowered him. When the train stopped at a station where it normally stops for some time, he said to a water-carrier that he will sit on the platform and he must pour water on him. The water-carrier did as requested. He was wearing his lūngī (loin cloth). He came into the train, changed into his clothes and performed his salāh. That Maulānā Sāhib related personally to Hadrat that he cannot describe the immense pleasure and satisfaction which he experienced in that salāh.

I say, the pleasure and satisfaction which he experienced is on account of carrying out the order of the Beloved. It was his love that prompted him to carry out the order and he got the courage to perform the ghusl in the manner in which he did. Hadrat

Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following on similar occasions:

> All thanks are due to Allāh *taʿālā* that we haven't died and we reached our Beloved. Congratulations to this courage of ours.

The instruction of love is always carried out and there is nothing that can stop it.

(2)

A murīd asked his shaykh: "Hadrat! What is my status?" He replied: "Do not perform the ʿishā salāh today." The murīd was strict in his adherence to the Sunnat and so was his shaykh. He must have rationalized something about his shaykh's order about not performing the ʿishā that night, but he himself could find no comfort. He was lying down in his bed and tossing and turning around. He couldn't fall asleep. His love for Allāh *taʿālā* was urging him to perform the salāh but when he thought of his shaykh's order, he would desist. Eventually, his bond with Allāh *taʿālā* overpowered him and he resolved to get up and perform the fard salāh so that Allāh's order is carried out, and he will leave the other [Sunnat] salāhs so that at least the shaykh's order is fulfilled to a certain extent. He got up, performed the fard salāh and went back to bed. He went into a slumber and saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a dream who asked him: "You fulfilled Allāh's obligation but what wrong did my Sunnat do to you that you left it out?" This immediately pricked his heart, his eyes opened, he got up and performed the remainder of his salāh. When he went to his shaykh the next morning the shaykh said: "Did you see your status? Had you not woken up to perform the fard salāh, Allāh *taʿālā* would have awakened you and made you to perform your salāh."

What the shaykh meant was that his murīd had reached a level of excellence, and anyone who reaches that level is divinely protected. While on this subject of reaching a level of excellence, I recall another incident. Listen to it!

There was a very pious woman. She was informed that her child drowned in a lake. On hearing this, she went to the edge of the lake and called out her child's name. The child answered from inside: "Yes mother!" The mother said: "Come here." The child emerged immediately. This is known as an extraordinary or supernatural event which is also enjoyed by the Auliyā'. The people asked the woman: "How did you know that he is alive?" She replied: "I have a special bond with Allāh *taʿālā* through which He informs me before hand of what is to happen. He did not inform me about this, so I concluded that my child is alive. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* does not do contrary to His norm even though we may do."

I was saying to you that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. In other words, just as you will be questioned for leaving out other obligations, you will be questioned for discarding this love. However, man can only acquire something when he makes an effort to acquire it. If love is compulsory and you have it in you, then well and good. But if there is a lack of it and you feel that your love is defective, then you will have to acquire it.

> Understand well that success comes with work, not with beautiful words. It comes with showing concern and it comes with adhering to the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā*.

The work which needs to be done is to subjugate the carnal self which is the obstacle on the path. The

subjugation of the self is realized through love and striving. When this is realized, man changes completely – his words, actions and conditions – everything changes.

Note: We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable us to subjugate the carnal self as outlined by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (7)

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* said that obligatory love is the one which prompts a person towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from His prohibitions, and enabling a person to be pleased with divine decree. He says further on that when a person commits an evil, it is because of a deficiency in his love. If the person who is committing an unlawful act rejects its impermissibility, then he is a kāfir. If he does not reject its impermissibility, he is a fāsiq (a flagrant sinner).

No matter what, once a person acquires Allāh's love, he is able to traverse the path very easily. Those who do not have this love experience many difficulties. A person gives preference to the desires of his carnal self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* because of a deficiency in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. It is now the task of the Ahlullāh to create in the heart of this person a desire for Allāh's love. When he does this, it becomes easy for him to fight his carnal self. The Ahlullāh sometimes focus on the person's heart, and this makes obedience and worship easy for him. In fact, obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* becomes beloved to him.

A question is posed to Hadrat Junayd

Someone asked Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh*:

هَلِ الْعَارِفُ يَزْنِيْ

Can an ʿārif commit adultery?

This question weighed heavily on Hadrat and he lowered his head for a long period of time. He then raised his head and said:

وَكَانَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرًا

In other words, yes. If Allāh decrees such a thing for a person, he will certainly do it.

The ʿulamā' say that the ʿārif's recognition and love of Allāh *taʿālā* becomes hidden at that time. Consequently, he commits the act. A few Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* committed similar acts, and people castigated them with harsh words. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was informed, he said: Do not do that. The person has repented in such a manner that if it is distributed among all the people of Madīnah it will suffice them for their salvation.[1]

The fundamental issue is that of divine decree, but the lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* cannot disobey Him while having that love and recognition with them. This is why I tell you that if you acquire love, you will acquire immense good. If not, you will remain distressed throughout your lives. This is what the Ahlullāh did – they embedded Allāh's love in their hearts and submitted completely before His orders. Love eases difficulties, but love in itself is not easy.

All you have to do is devote yourself to acquiring love. Even if you do not acquire perfect love, defective love will come to your help. Every sinner has some level of love in his heart. This is why a believer is disturbed when he commits a sin. When a sinner turns to Allāh

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[1] *Mishkāt*, vol. 2, p. 312.

taʿālā, he is very remorseful over his disobedience and feels much anguish when he thinks about it.

There was a man who used to frequent Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā’ *rahimahullāh*. One day he sat at the rear of the assembly and said: “There is no doubt that Hadrat is a Walī, but there is also no doubt about our misfortune because let alone not reaching the high stations of the Tarīqat, we are not even able to give up sinning.” Hadrat received some inspiration and he must have focussed on the man. Later on that same man used to say: “Hadrat has drawn me in such a way that even if I want to commit a sin, I cannot.”

A poet says:

> Love itself will teach you the etiquette of love. All you have to do is develop an inclination in this direction.

This is the path of Allāh *taʿālā* which people tread solely with love. Love for the shaykh is a cause of love for Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the Ahlullāh attach a lot of value to love for the shaykh.

A man related to me that there was a person who tied his hands and legs, and threw himself into a river. One wave would convey him from one side to the other, and another wave would convey him from that side to this side. Then a large wave came and cast him completely onto the shore. I say, this is the condition of the Ahlullāh. They too cast themselves into Allāh’s ocean of love. They are then pleased with whatever condition they experience until a wave of mercy comes and conveys them across. They have to bear difficulties but they do it because it is for Allāh *taʿālā*. Eventually it is they who are the successful ones. Others cannot even understand what the Ahlullāh

have to bear on the path of love. Hadrat Hāfiz *rahimahullāh* says:

> The night is dark. The danger of the wave is lurking, and a whirlpool is a separate obstacle on its own. What do those who are relaxing on the shore know about our condition?

Salvation will be realized through love, and through the grace and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā*. If just one wave of mercy rises, it will convey us across. Salvation is not dependent on actions. Many people of actions will be kept behind. Many others who had no actions – in fact, whom you considered to be flagrant sinners – will be victorious by virtue of their īmān and love.

These are points related to Dīn and the Sharīʿat as explained by the ʿulamā'. This is why we are relating them to you and trying to explain them to you. Perhaps a certain servant of Allāh *taʿālā* will understand these points.

Listen, brothers! I am not saying anything from my side. I am relating to you the statement of the author of *Fath al-Bārī*. He is saying the love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory, so you will have to acquire it. If you see that you have it in you, well and good. If not, you will have to acquire it from the true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look! I found a quotation regarding which neither you nor I can say anything. I am saying this to you because if I said anything from my side, you people would object and say: "We never heard such a thing before this." Now that I quoted the statement of the author of *Fath al-Bārī*, you cannot say anything against him. He is saying that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. He explains it and says: That amount of love is compulsory which prompts a person to carry

out Allāh’s orders, abstain from His prohibitions and be pleased with His decree (taqdīr). Any person who is caught up in disobedience either by committing an unlawful act or leaving out an obligatory act, then it is because of a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*. He gave preference to the desires of his self over the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A definition of rational love

Before defining love, the author of *Fath al-Bārī* quotes a statement of Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh*.

> Love in this context refers to rational love. This means that the thing which a sound intellect is inclined towards must be chosen even if it is against the desire of the self. Like a sick person who is naturally averse to taking a medicine and does not want to take it, but he rationally becomes inclined towards it and takes it. In the same way, man will have to ponder over the fact that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is ordering us to do certain things and abstain from certain things which are for the wellbeing of our worldly life and for success in the Hereafter. At the same time, his intellect inclines in that direction. Man will therefore do it in emulation of the order of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He will do this by subjugating his desire to that order. He will experience a rational joy in doing it. Rational joy means that a

person’s mind is fully aware of the advantage and good of a certain thing.[1]

This is a very delicate issue. I saw a man in Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan who enjoyed major spiritual conditions. He used to engage in a lot of dhikr and people thought that he was a great man of spiritual ecstasy. When I went back to Thānah Bhawan after some time, the people there asked me if I heard about him. He changed completely [in the opposite direction] to the extent of discarding his topī and his Islamic attire. We learn from this that we should not pay too much of attention to spiritual ecstasy, trance, etc. The fundamental thing is that of a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. This is known as love. There is much confusion about it. Nonetheless, the ʿulamā’ have made major a contribution by directing us in the direction of love. They say that Allāh’s love and acquiring that love is compulsory on every Muslim so that, through it, a person can carry out the orders of the Sharīʿat and abstain from its prohibitions. After all, the Sharīʿat is the fundamental; if it is not understood, it will result in defects in our Dīn. Normally there is a type of intoxication in love, but there is no intoxication in the explanation of the ʿulamā’ – it is filled with awareness and perception. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and genuine Auliyā’ were people who possessed awareness, perception and presence of mind.

It is the duty of the ʿulamā’ to teach the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. If they do not do it, ignorance will pervade. There was a saint who forgetfully entered the masjid with his left foot. He fell down unconscious immediately. He tried to find the reason in himself for

[1] *Fat<u>h</u> al-Bārī*, vol. 1 p. 46.

forgetting. He concluded that it was probably some sin which distanced him from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look at the level of following the Sunnat of that saint. He misplaced just one foot, and he fell down unconscious. These are etiquette in Allāh's court which we learnt from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He taught us external etiquette and internal etiquette. It is necessary for us to practise on both. A person cannot be accepted in Allāh's court without this. It is easier to observe the external etiquette, while the internal etiquette are very difficult. They can be practised only through Allāh's inspiration.

I am astonished at you people that when you see a person who is very particular about carrying out Allāh's orders and abstaining from His prohibitions, you do not consider him to be a saint although sainthood refers to love for Allāh *taʿālā* and affinity with Him. Love and affinity are internal matters, while carrying out Allāh's orders are signs of that love and affinity. When love for Allāh *taʿālā* becomes embedded in the heart, a person is able to do things which others cannot. There was a saint who was so weak that he could not get up to go and perform salāh. People had to give him support so that he could get up. However, once he commenced his salāh, he would perform a most beautiful salāh. The moment he made salām to complete his salāh, he would summon a few people to hold him or else he would fall. What was that thing which enabled him to stand before Allāh *taʿālā* and made it easy for him to be obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*? It was really love for Allāh *taʿālā* by virtue of which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred this special favour to him. A poet says:

> Although I am gone very old and weak, I become young the moment I see your face.

Proof of Allāh's friendship

The teachings of a saint are normally proof of his friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*. It is through his teachings that people learn the Sharīʿat and recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. Since it is through love that Dīn and the Sharīʿat become easy, it is the duty of the ʿulamā' to create that love in the people. There has to be personalities for this purpose everywhere, or else misguidance and deviation will proliferate. You now see people searching for a pious servant of Allāh *taʿālā*. The reason is that no one is devoid of Allāh's quest. When a person has a genuine quest, he will certainly find a pious servant of Allāh *taʿālā* through whose prayers and attention he follows the straight path. Once he gets onto the straight path, he starts realizing his past evils. He expresses remorse over that condition and progresses in this way.

Idol-worship was most common among the Arabs. They had idols in their homes and idols which they used to carry with them on journeys. On one occasion, a Sahābī who was sitting in an assembly of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "O Rasūlullāh! Idols benefited me." Everyone was aghast when they heard this. The Sahābī then explained his statement by saying: "I was on a journey in pre-Islamic times. I had carried an idol with me which was made of barley-paste. At one point of the journey I felt extremely hungry and could find nothing to eat, so I ate that idol and satiated my hunger with it. This is the benefit I got from an idol." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* smiled and laughed.

Look! There was a time when a thing was part and parcel of their religion and creed, but once they

received guidance, that same thing appeared to them as an object of play and foolishness.

Now listen to another incident:

I had a friend in Deoband who was a very pious man. He was affiliated to one shaykh. People used to address my friend as Sufījī. All the students held him in high regard and they used to run errands for him. He used to cut pieces of paper into the shape of coins, give them to poor students, and tell them to use them in the shops. Those pieces of paper used to turn into real coins. But he never used them for himself. One day he said to me: "Your shaykh combines the internal and external." In other words, he has a genuine internal bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and externally too he follows the Sunnat. "Therefore take me to H̲ad̲rat so that I could pledge bayʿat to him." I agreed. Subsequently, H̲ad̲rat happened to go to Muz̲affar Nagar, so I took this Sufījī with me and we went to Muz̲affar Nagar. I presented him to H̲ad̲rat and informed him of his intention to pledge bayʿat to him. H̲ad̲rat looked at him from head to toe and accepted his bayʿat. H̲ad̲rat must have gauged that he is a worthy person. Khwājah S̲āh̲ib [one of H̲ad̲rat khulafā'] said: "H̲ad̲rat, you don't normally accept a person's bayʿat in your first meeting with him!?" H̲ad̲rat replied: "Everyone does not have to be treated the same."

I related this incident to show you that when a person's affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* is correct and His love penetrates his heart, then it is as if the line becomes straight. Subsequently, the heart does not like anything which is against the Sharīʿat and against the Sunnat.

Look at the high level which that Sufi S̲āh̲ib enjoyed! If Allāh's guidance was not with him, he could have

used that power of his [of causing paper money to turn into real coins] as a means to acquire wealth and authority. However, because his bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was correct and he had a strong affiliation with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he was searching for a shaykh who follows the Sunnat. After affiliating himself with Hadrat, he gave up turning paper money into real coins. He used to say: "Hadrat Maulānā does not consider it permissible so I will most certainly abstain from doing it." What an excellent example of following one's shaykh. The same Sufījī said to me: "I shook hands with Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. I don't know what he did to me that I remained sitting here in the remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* from zuhr time until ʿasr time."

The Sufījī had so much of love for following the Sunnat that he left his previous shaykh because he found the latter lacking in following the Sunnat. Thus we see that it is those personalities who combined the internal and external who were able to achieve much more. The worst of atheists and deviates went to them, made blasphemous statements in their presence, but those personalities treated them with their Allāh-bestowed insight in a manner which caused them to change for the better.

Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīz and Nasīm Shāh

The following incident about Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* is recorded.

A person by the name of Nasīm Shāh was affiliated to the Imām Shāhī pseudo-Sufi lineage [this was a deviated Sufi sect]. He travelled to Delhi on one occasion and went to meet Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Bearing in mind that many people used to revert to him, he developed a superiority attitude.

He showed no regard whatsoever to Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Instead, he just walked in freely, greeted him according to his colloquial way of greeting, and said: “Shāh Sāhib! For how much longer are you going to remain in the shackles of the Sharīʿat? Get out of that prison and leave the Sharīʿat.”

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* responded with absolute decorum: “Come in Shāh Sāhib! Come and have a seat.” He seated him near him and spoke to him at length about normal day to day issues. In the midst of the conversation, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* asked him a few questions:

Shāh Sāhib: Miyā Sāhib! Have you studied the Qur’ān?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāhib: Did you study Persian?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāhib: Did you study any Arabic?

Nasīm Khān: Yes, I studied *Mīr Qutbī*.

Shāh Sāhib: Did you learn horse riding?

Nasīm Khān: Yes.

Shāh Sāhib: Did you learn any of the martial arts?

Nasīm Khān: Yes. I learnt dagger-fighting, stick-fighting, archery, etc.

Shāh Sāhib: What was your occupation in the beginning?

Nasīm Khān: I was an officer in the army.

Shāh Sāhib: How long did it take you to study the Qur’ān? How long did it take you to study Persian?

How long did it take you to study Arabic? How long did it take you to study the martial arts? For how long did you work as an officer?

Nasīm Sāhib replied to all these questions and Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* got him to affirm all his answers. Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* then challenged him by saying:

O you poor fellow! Sit up and listen carefully. You remained in the womb of your mother for nine months and you could not come out of it by your own choice. Then you were in the prison of your mother's lap which you could not leave out of your own choice. You were then restricted to having to hold her hand. Then you were in the prison of being carried on her shoulders. For a certain period of time you were confined to learning the Qur'ān. During that period, your teacher must have slapped you and caned you, but you could not come out of that prison. Then you were confined to learning Persian for a certain period of time, and then Arabic. You spent a certain number of days in the prison of dagger-fighting, stick-fighting, horse-riding, and archery. Then you were in the prison of the British for some time [when you were employed as an officer in their army]. At present you are in the prison of having to shave off your eyebrows. How, then, can you claim to be a free man? In short, there is no one in this world who is not restricted to something or someone or the other. We are restricted by the Sharī'at. However, you must remember that your prison is like raw silver. If you were to ask for its price, it will first be heated. Without it, no one will buy it from you. On the other hand, our "prison" [the Sharī'at] is like a coin which has been minted in the royal mint. We can sell it or exchange it wherever we like.

The poor fellow was extremely embarrassed. He got up and left. From this one incident we can gauge with what sharp-wittedness Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* preserved Dīn in those days.

The seniors of Dīn contributed immensely in the field of reformation and rectification. Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is the brother of Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Both of them were Auliyā'. On one occasion a person said to a raʾīs[1] that if any Sayyid[2] goes to Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, he accords him respect even if he belongs to the Shīʿah sect. The raʾīs was a Shīʿah and decided to go and test Hadrat Shāh Sāhib. When he approached Hadrat Shāh Sāhib, the latter stood up out of respect for him. The raʾīs said: "Hadrat, I am a Shīʿah, how come you stood up out of respect for me!?" Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* replied: "If a calligrapher makes a mistake while writing the Qur'ān, we will still show respect to that Qur'ān because it is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*." The raʾīs was overjoyed by the treatment and by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib's reply, and began distributing free sweetmeats in Delhi (he was overjoyed because as per Hadrat Shāh Sāhib's treatment of him, it was learnt that he was really a Sayyid).

There is a similar incident with regard to the same Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He used to sit in his exterior lounge which faced the street. Anyone who passed by – whether Sunnī or Shīʿah – used to offer salām to him. Hadrat Shāh

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[1] A leader, wealthy person, man of authority in the community.

[2] A descendent of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Sāhib used to reply to the salām of a Sunnī with his right hand, and to the salām of a Shīʿah with his left hand. He was never found wrong in his assumption even though many of those who greeted him were not known to him. He used to see with the light of Allāh *taʿālā*. People like this effect a lot of reformation and rectification. Nowadays the hearts are devoid of these things. The light of the heart has been replaced by the light of electricity. This is why religious and creedal benefit have disappeared.

The self-obliteration of a saint

A person said to a saint: "I want to get my daughter married. I request you to write a letter of intercession to such and such wealthy person to help me." The saint wrote the letter. The man went to the wealthy person, presented the letter to him and he read it. The wealthy person had some bad thoughts about the saint, so he replied angrily: "Go and give this letter to him and tell him to place it in his backside." The man was quite embarrassed at being the cause for such verbal abuses to be hurled against the saint. When he returned, he remained silent in the presence of the saint. The saint asked: "Brother, what happened with regard to your request?" The man maintained his silence. The saint repeated the question: "Tell me what happened?" He replied: "Hadrat, let the matter pass. It is not worth speaking about." The saint persisted. The man had no alternative but to relate what transpired and what the wealthy man said. The saint said: "Go back to him and tell him that if this action of mine [of placing the letter in my backside] can enable any Muslim's need to be fulfilled, then I am prepared to do even that."

The man went back and informed the wealthy person. The latter got up immediately, dragged himself to the

saint's place and begged for his pardon. He added: "Hadrat, pardon me, I did not know you. Here, take the key to my safe-box and give him whatever amount he wants."

What caused the wealthy man to change so quickly? The fact of the matter is that noble character can make a very strong impact. This is why the man was so impressed by the saint.

The juridical acumen of Hadrat Thānwī

I related the explanation of a ruling given by Hadrat *rahimahullāh* to a person. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say that if anyone sends food as a gift to you, you must empty it into your own utensil and it eat from there. However, *fīrnī*[1] is excluded from this ruling because it is made and solidified in a bowl. If you transfer it into another utensil, it gets upset [it does not remain set]. This is why the jurists say that it is permissible to eat it directly from the utensil which was sent by the one who sent it as a gift. This rule does not apply to other foods. When I related this ruling to the man, he was overjoyed.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was an eminent jurist. Juridical rulings were always present in his mind but he insisted on referring to himself as a student. He was a distinguished spiritual master but he concealed himself behind the veil of knowledge. He used to quote this couplet quite often:

> If a friend fulfils some of the rights of love, it will be his kindness. Apart from this, a poor lover gets happy with even a little attention.

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[1] A sweet dessert which has to set in a bowl.

I am relating some incidents of the pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā* to show you how they developed a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and how they obliterated themselves. They were always focused on the Hereafter and thought about death.

Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh* was in Lucknow so I went to meet him. He was about to leave for his office so he asked me to join him. I accompanied him to his office. He kept himself occupied in his work and sat there. I noticed him repeating the following couplet:

> How can the inevitable ever be deferred? The life that is withheld will also have to depart.

When someone heard this couplet, he said: "You don't ever forget Allāh." Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* did not say anything.

He has another couplet:

> Where will you ever place flowers over my grave when you will not even be able to throw soil over it!?

I quoted this couplet in one of my lectures. A police officer who was present jumped up when he heard it and was most affected by it.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away on a sea journey and was handed over to the ocean. When people thought about how often he used to quote the above couplet, they said that he received divine inspiration that he is going to die at sea. (compiler)

Hadrat Muftī Nizām ad-Dīn Sāhib, the muftī of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, said that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

rahimahullāh used to quote the following couplet quite often:

> We are disgraced when we die. We should rather drown in the sea so that neither would our body be carried nor would we have a grave.

This couplet shows the selflessness and self-obliteration of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. This was certainly not only his spiritual condition but his spiritual rank. (compiler)

The integrity of a leprous woman

A woman who suffered from leprosy in the time of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* began performing tawāf of the Kaʿbah. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said to her: "O servant-maid of Allāh. Do not cause offence to people." The woman left. When Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* passed away, some people went to her and said: "The person who stopped you from tawāf is no longer around, so you can go and perform tawāf." She replied: "He was not such a man that he must be obeyed while he is alive and disobeyed when he dies. It contradicts confidence in and love for a person."

A sign of acceptance of dhikr

A man was engaged in dhikr. Shaytān came to him one day and tried to lead him astray. He said: "You are shooting arrows in the dark." The man too thought to himself that when he is not getting anything in return – no salām, no messages, etc. – then what is the use of this dhikr?

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* related this incident in his *Mathnawī*.

The man was, nonetheless, sincere and devoted, so Allāh *taʿālā* could not tolerate that he be led astray. Allāh *taʿālā* sent an angel with this message: "You are wrong to think that We do not send salām or any message to you. Rather, your saying "Allāh, Allāh" is in fact Our reply. As for the pain and pining which has developed in your heart, that is really Our messenger."

What this means is that when you say "Allāh" once, and are then able to say it again, it is actually Our salām and greeting to you. If the "Allāh" which you said the first time was not accepted, you would not have got the inspiration to say it a second time. Since you were able to say it a second time, it is because We have turned Our attention towards you.

The man realized his mistake and repented.

There was a saint who, no matter where he passed by, the young boys of that area would throw stones at him. He would say: "O boys! Don't use so large stones because my body gets soiled with blood and I have to perform s̲alāh in the same clothes. If you really want to pelt me, then pelt pebbles at me."

Glory to Allāh! Look at how affectionate and selfless these people were! It was this impeccable character of theirs which used to have an effect on others. It was a practical teaching and propagation of sound character. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (8)

I have been talking to you about love for several days. I would like to explain it further today. Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says in *Qasd as-Sabīl* that the reality of sulūk - which is commonly known as tasawwuf [Sufism] - is to develop the internal and external selves. The external self with obligatory bodily actions (e.g. salāh, fasting, zakāh, hajj, recitation of the Qur'ān, dhikr, etc.) and the internal self with true beliefs (īmān and Allāh consciousness) and internal characteristics such as sincerity, gratefulness, patience, abstinence, humility, etc. This is one level.

The next level involves having the first level and accompanying it with external non-obligatory acts of obedience and continuous internal dhikr. The acquisition of the first level is fard-e-ʿayn - compulsory on every Muslim. This is known as the Sharīʿat which comprises the internal and external. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَذَرُوْا ظَاهِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

Give up external and internal sins.

Perfection in Sufism and the Tarīqat means that a person must go one step further by acquiring the next level. It entails leaving aside non-obligatory acts of obedience and occupying the internal self with continuous dhikr. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

Much further on in the book, H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* says:

There are two points which are indications that internal affinity has been acquired. (1) One is that the person has such a high level of dhikr and such a powerful memory that at no time does he experience negligence and forgetfulness, and he does not have to make too much of effort in this regard. (2) The other is obedience to the truth. In other words, when it comes to the injunctions of the Sharīʿat – in worship, character, words and speech – he has such an intense desire to carry them out and such a hatred for the prohibitions of the Sharīʿat as he has for natural likes and dislikes. Together with this, greed for this world must leave his heart.

The person must become:

كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ

His character was the Qur'ān.

It should be borne in mind that temporary laziness or whisperings which are not acted upon do not negate this liking and aversion.

The above-mentioned level of remembrance and obedience – which is a sign of spiritual affinity – when acquired entails love for Allāh *taʿālā.*

The author of *Fath̲ al-Bārī* writes:

محبة الله على قسمين، فرض وندب، فالفرض المحبة التي تبعث على امتثال أوامره والانتهاء عن معاصيه، والرضاء بما يقدره.

Love for Allāh taʿālā is of two types: compulsory and desirable. Compulsory love must prompt a person

towards carrying out Allāh's orders, abstaining from His disobedience and being pleased with His decree.

Just as the author of *Fath al-Bārī* said that love is of two types, Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says that one level of Sufism is fard-e-ʿayn on every Muslim. It involves carrying out the obligatory actions of the Sharīʿat with the body parts, and embellishing the internal self with correct beliefs and good characteristics.

From the statement of the author of *Fath al-Bārī* we learn that love is compulsory because it becomes the catalyst for carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. In the same way, Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is saying that there are two signs of spiritual affinity. One is that the person develops a desire to obey the truth. In other words, he wants to follow the injunctions of the Sharīʿat whether it be in acts of worship, interactions with people, character and mannerisms, words and actions; and he develops an aversion towards prohibitions. When a person's worship, dealings, character, etc. will be in order, it will be proof that he has acquired spiritual affinity. We learn from this that what the author of *Fath al-Bārī* referred to as love, Hadrat Thānwī refers to it as spiritual affinity. In fact, he also refers to it as love. He says: "The above-mentioned level of remembrance and obedience – which is a sign of spiritual affinity – when acquired entails love for Allāh *taʿālā*."

Love and spiritual affinity are one and the same. Through them obedience is realized, and a person is totally obedient on account of them [love and spiritual affinity].

Now let me explain this. Listen attentively. Whether you call it spiritual affinity or the ability to remember,

both are same but expressed differently. They refer to the same condition which is found in a person’s heart, and they influence all matters. This is the very same thing which is acquired from serving the saints. It is obtained from the company of the people of spiritual affinity and spiritual love. If you want to become a man of spiritual affinity by studying a book, then I will say that it is most difficult.

A person asked me to suggest a book on good character. I said to him: “There are books on this subject, but let me tell you just one thing, listen to it – do not backbite. If you practise on this, Allāh *taʿālā* will open other things to you.”

ʿAllāmah Bayd̲āwī *rah̲imahullāh* writes:

مَنْ عَمِلَ بِمَا عَلِمَ عَلَّمَهُ اللهُ عِلْمَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

When a person practises on the knowledge which he has, Allāh taʿālā teaches him what he does not know.

H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say: When it comes to other fields, one has to have knowledge first and then practise on it. But in the T̲arīqat, action comes first and knowledge thereafter.

H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say a most beautiful thing in this regard: “The books on tas̲awwuf are for the shaykh; not for the murīd. Just as the books on medicine are for the doctor and not the patient.” H̲ad̲rat used to say this quite often. The ʿulamā’ who were present used to listen to it and shake their heads happily.

Now that I mentioned the shaking of heads, I recall an incident. A youngster came to H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh*. When H̲ad̲rat asked him something, he did not reply verbally; he merely shook his head. H̲ad̲rat

rahimahullāh said: "You were able to shake such a big head but you could not move your tongue!?" Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then explained this point himself. He said: The reason why it is easier to shake the head is that the head is un-compounded. On the other hand, the tongue is compounded[1] thing in the sense that you will have to think of words and then construct a sentence. An un-compounded thing is easier than something which is compounded." When the 'ulamā' used to hear these academic discussions of Hadrat, they used to express their admiration and say that Hadrat explained philosophy.

I was saying to you that the point which was made by the author of *Fath al-Bārī* was also made by Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Just as love prompts a person to carry out orders, the power of his memory enables him to remember all those things. You may say to me that you never heard that love is compulsory. I say to you that when do you ever hear anything? And if the truth be told, every Maulānā too does not know these things. How will the laity know them?

Now listen further:

In his *al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* notes certain prerequisites for the mashā'ikh. One of the prerequisites are:

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[1] The words compounded (*murakkab*) and un-compounded (*basīt*) are philosophical terms.

الشرط الثالث أن يكون زاهدا في الدنيا راغبا في الآخرة، مواظبا على الطاعات المؤكدة والأذكار المأثورة المذكورة في صحاح الأحاديث، مواظبا على تعلق القلب بالله سبحانه، وكان له ملكة راسخة.

The third condition is that he must disregard this world and be desirous of the Hereafter. He must be particular about fulfilling the emphasised acts of obedience, and the different forms of dhikr as related in the authentic Ahādīth. He must maintain a strong bond with Allāh taʿālā with his heart, and a deeply embedded ability to remember.[1]

Look! Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that a shaykh to whom one is pledging bayʿat must have a strong ability to remember because through it, it becomes easy to carry out orders and abstain from prohibitions. Another name for this is love and spiritual affinity, which you are probably getting restless about because you are thinking that this is the first time you heard such a thing. You may have not heard it, but I heard it from Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and he heard it from Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying that this spiritual affinity has been coming down continuously.

I established this point in my book *Nisbat-e-Sūfiyyah*. I said: Do you think that salāh, fasting, etc. have been coming down from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a totally "dry" form? Do you think there is no freshness in them? That freshness is known as love and spiritual affinity. Those who fulfil orders and abstain from prohibitions experience this spiritual

[1] *Al-Qaul al-Jamīl*, p. 20.

affinity. It is through the same love that a person is pleased with divine decree. Because we have discarded it, spiritual affinity and love have become strangers to us. Previously people used to go to the Sufis to acquire this; even the ʿulamā' used to go to them. From this we learn that love is something which has to be acquired.

Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to explain to us that we should never be offended by Hadrat Thānwī's method of rectification. Instead, we must think that his love is establishing itself in our hearts. Obviously, if something establishes itself in the heart, it will cause some sort of pain. But this pain is a blessed pain because it eventually results in love being embedded in the heart.

I say that the same thing can be said about a Muslim who carries out the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. Many injunctions are difficult for him, but the reality is that this is not really a difficulty. Instead, he must think to himself and become happy over it that the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is becoming embedded in his heart. Based on this love, a believer develops love for the orders of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that when Munkar and Nakīr come to a person in his grave and awaken him, he will feel as though it is the time of ʿasr, so he will say to them: "Let me perform my ʿasr salāh first, I will speak to you after that." They will say: "We considered you to be a pious person from before, and now we have seen it for ourselves."

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* mentioned [previously] the power of remembering. Let me say something in this regard. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِيْ

Establish salāh for My remembrance.

We learn from this that salāh is also a form of remembrance. When there is a defect in it, a man discards an obligatory act or commits a prohibited act. The ʿulamā’ of the past used to acquire these qualities. But now the situation has changed. A Maulānā Sāhib came to me and we spoke about my book, *Nisbat-e-Sūfīyyah*. He said: “It is a most essential and beneficial topic.” He then expressed his sadness by saying: “Nowadays the ʿulamā’ have forgotten these things.” To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate that there was an ʿālim in Bhopal who had been a student of Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Hayy Sāhib Firangī Mahallī *rahimahullāh*. He was seated one day when a fakir came by. The latter focussed his attention on the ʿālim in an attempt to impress him. The ʿālim also focussed his attention on the fakir, and the latter fell down immediately. The ʿālim then said: “If you need to ask for anything then ask. There is no need for you to resort to all these things [efforts to impress me with your spiritual powers]. You assume that we cannot do such things. This is not the case, we certainly can.”

I say to you people, are you really paying any attention? You cannot achieve much by mere listening. You will have to pluck some courage and do something.

During the days for the freedom of India, a man in ʿAlī Garh thought to himself that Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* must be very worried by the opposition of people towards him, and his worry must have caused him to become thin and weak. He left ʿAlī

Garh and came to Thānah Bhawan solely to check if he was correct in his thinking. He observed Hadrat joking and speaking casually with people. He expressed his thoughts to Hadrat. Hadrat said: "Why should I be worried? There are two types of benefits; one worldly and the other for the Dīn. I am experiencing both. The Dīnī benefit is that people are backbiting me and speaking ill of me. Because of this, I will receive their good actions on the day of Resurrection. Just as I am eating here for free, I will enter Paradise for free. The worldly benefit is that my income has increased. Why, then, should I be worried, and why should I be concerned?"

During the same period, a man from Meerut quoted the following couplet to Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib:

> Although the entire world has become my
> enemy, what I really need to know is that
> my Beloved is not angry at me.

The man said: "This is the condition of Hadrat Maulānā." Hadrat Khwājah Sāhib quoted this couplet to Hadrat. Because it was in line with Hadrat's present condition, he was overcome by a type of ecstasy. I say, this is what you call spiritual affinity. The only concern of a man of spiritual affinity is that his Beloved must not be angry with him.

This Maulānā Irshād Ahmad Sāhib (from Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband who had a special bond with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*) is seated here. He says that when he is here and the words:

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

Are said in the adhān, his heart experiences a unique feeling. I said: "From this we can gauge that you have love in your heart in the sense that when the name of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is mentioned, it creates some type of movement in your heart."

I came across this incident in a book: When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* passed away, Hadrat Bilāl *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* went to Syria. When he came to Madīnah after a long period of time, the people requested him to call out the adhān. When he came to the words:

اَشْهَدُ اَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

It made a deep impact on the people to the extent that women came out of their homes. Everyone felt as if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had arrived.

Going back to our topic – remembrance, affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* and love are all the same. They are the signs and effects of internal spiritual affinity. You people perform salāh, keep fast etc. It cannot happen that you pay particular attention to these acts and your hearts remain devoid of Allāh's love. It is really love which is prompting you to do these actions. Look! You people come here, so how can it be said that you do not have love?! A person from Meerut came to me in Allāhābād. When he met me, he fell down and started to cry. I deduced from this that he has love for me. However, mere crying is not proof of love. There are many other effects of love. Just as your love for a person is proved in different ways, there are different effects of Allāh's love. The greatest effect is that a person carries out His orders, abstains from His prohibitions, and is pleased with divine decree. He carries out acts of obedience and abstains from sins.

A person related the following incident to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*: A police officer who was a very religious person was taking a prisoner to some place.

On the way the time of maghrib salāh arrived. He said to the prisoner: “You sit here while I perform my salāh.” The moment he commenced his salāh, the prisoner escaped. The man did not become too concerned and continued with his salāh at ease. He then went to his senior officer and related what happened. There is most probably a rule that if a prisoner escapes while being under the care of a police officer, the latter will have to be imprisoned in the prisoner’s place. The seniors at the police station had full faith in this police officer’s piety, so they said to him that they will not record anything in their books for now. He must go and look for the prisoner.

When he was told this, he began performing salāh after thinking to himself, where am I going to search for him now? I will be wasting my time. I rather perform salāh in the meantime. At midnight someone knocked on the door. He asked: “Who is it?” A person replied: “It is me, your prisoner.” He opened the door and asked the prisoner: “Tell me, why did you come back of your own accord?” The prisoner said: “Hadrat, if I did not come back to you I would not have been able to go anywhere, because whenever I turned in a direction which was away from you, I became blind. And when I turned in your direction, I was able to see. So I thought to myself, I rather come back to you. I will bear imprisonment for a few days. At least my eyesight will remain secure. If I escaped, then although I would have saved myself from punishment and imprisonment, I will be blind for the rest of my life. I felt I could bear imprisonment but not to remain blind. This is why I came back.”

Note: Glory to Allāh! This was due to the blessing of salāh. If we perform our salāh properly, we too can

enjoy its blessings. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

I say, it was a karāmat (supernatural feat) of that police officer, the blessing of his obedience, the fruit of the spiritual affinity which he had with Allāh *taʿālā*, and a reward for the love which he had for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Just as we classify obedient people as lovers of Allāh *taʿālā*, we will examine the obedience of those who claim to love Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, if there is no obedience in their lives, we will say they are lying in their claims. In fact, if the absence of obedience is due to rejection, then let alone not being a lover, he will not even be a believer. He will be a kāfir. If he does not reject an act of obedience, but his not carrying it out is due to laziness, then he can be a lover but one whose love is defective. He is also a fāsiq (flagrant sinner) for the absence of obedience.

We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with perfect love coupled with perfect obedience. (compiler)

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (9)

Love means that the heart must remain attached to Allāh *taʿālā*. The rights which a servant fulfils to Allāh *taʿālā* are corrected by virtue of love. It is through this love that a person becomes a man of true affiliation. Love constantly steers a person and informs him that he has done a certain act correctly or a certain act was not right. It is love which maintains a correct relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* through acts of worship. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلا لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ[1]

I created man and jinn solely for My worship.

In his tafsīr of the above verse, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* interprets لِيَعْبُدُوْنِ to mean لِيَعْرِفُوْنِ.

I created man and jinn so that they may recognize Me. In other words, it is through love that man recognizes his Creator and the rights which He has over him. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to love:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيْرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالُ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوْهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ

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[1] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 56.

إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ؕ وَاللهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ.

Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your family, the wealth which you have acquired, the business whose closure you fear, and the homes which you love are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and fighting in His path, then wait till Allāh sends His command. Allāh does not guide the disobedient people.[1]

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say that in the above verse, Allāh *taʿālā* does not prohibit love for the persons and things mentioned, but prohibits having more love for them. In other words, it is forbidden to have love for them which surpasses love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* This is a most beautiful explanation which has made things very easy for us – that love in itself is not prohibited, but more love is prohibited. If there is more love for these things compared to the love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it will cause a difference in carrying out Allāh's orders. If love for these things do not prevent a person from carrying out Allāh's orders, there will be no harm in loving them. Anyway, if a person acquires love for Allāh *taʿālā*, he will not consider anything equal to Him.

Take the following example of carrying out Allāh's orders: A person was hosting a function at his place. It was his responsibility to provide the various ingredients to the cook. He was passing the ingredient

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 24.

to him. He raised the beam of the scale to weigh the ghee when he heard the adhān. He placed the scale one side and said: “I will weigh it after salāh.” People said to him: “You already have the beam in your hand, at least weigh that much.” He replied: “No, I will do it after the salāh.”

Look! His friends and relatives were present for that function, the food and drink were also there, but the bond which he had with Allāh *taʿālā* was given first preference. This is the spirit of Dīn.

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is explained by the Sufis and by the ʿulamā’ as well, but the latter are more guarded in their explanation. Listen to what Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* has to say about a genuine seeker of the truth. He writes in his famous work, *Qasd as-Sabīl*:

> Together with repentance, a person must make a firm resolution that no matter how disgruntled his carnal self becomes, no matter how much harm his wealth and life have suffer, how much worldly advantages he misses, and how much people chastise him – he will bear everything in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and will never disobey them. If a person cannot resolve to do this much, he is not a seeker of the truth because a true seeker is as described by a poet:
>
> O heart! It is better for you to drink the wine of love and become intoxicated. And without having wealth and treasures, you become as wealthy as Qārūn. Listen! The greatest prerequisite for placing your foot on the path to the Beloved – a path which

> is fraught with major dangers and obstacles – is that you become a madman (i.e. a genuine lover).[1]

I say, as long as the carnal self is not subdued, dangers will continue coming. Once loves enters, everything else will come to an end.

Love for Allāh is compulsory

This proves that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory, and that carrying out His orders and abstaining from His prohibitions are essential. Thus, whenever a person commits a sin, it will be because of a defect in his love for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A couplet which was loved by Hadrat Thānwī

The following couplet of Khwājah Majdhūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was most loved by Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat used to say: "If I had 100 000 rupees, I would have bought this couplet from Khwājah Sāhib."

> Every desire has departed from my heart.
> Now You enter my heart because I have achieved solitude.

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* loved this couplet because it expressed the condition of his heart.

I was going to Pānīpat on one occasion when I met an old man. He said: "I attended his lectures. He stops us from samāʿ (a special type of Sufi music) while he himself has a drum and fiddle." The man said this out of love and not by way of an objection. What he meant

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[1] *Qasd as-Sabīl.*

was that Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was a man of spiritual ecstasy. When he quotes poetry in his lectures, the poems enchant us just as people are enchanted by the playing of musical instruments.

Qutb ʿAlī Shāh was a dervish who was spiritually affiliated with Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and a friend of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*. He used to go to Gangoh for the ʿurs. As was his norm, he went for the ʿurs on one occasion and went to meet Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. When he returned, he said to Maulānā Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*: "I went to Gangoh and I met your pīr bhāi.[1] He is an embodiment of light and effulgence." Maulānā Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* said: "Brother, you are right. It is the light of following the Sunnat."

The importance of following the Sunnat

I am presenting the Sunnat to you – not of my father's and grandfather's but of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I am relating to you the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If his Sunnat is not adopted, misguidance will spread and Dīn and non-Dīn will not be differentiated. After all, it is the Sunnat which differentiates between these two. When the Sunnat departs, the distinguisher will be removed. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* I am now observing a general interest for Dīn in the people. I am hopeful of Allāh's grace to be included in this enthusiasm.

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[1] When two or more people are khulafā' of the same shaykh they are known as pīr bhāi/s.

It is difficult to turn heedless people to heedful ones

When I described the condition of the Muslims to certain seniors, they said that the masses have certainly shown an interest but there is a dearth of workers. The reason for this shortage is that the work itself is difficult. The ʿulamā' who are teaching in the madāris are undoubtedly fulfilling a very difficult responsibility. However, it is not any less difficult to turn heedless people to heedful ones, and to turn their focus towards Allāh *taʿālā*. It is a most difficult task. Worship in times of tribulation is most lofty.

وَعِبَادَةُ الْهَرَجِ كَهِجْرَةٍ إِلَيَّ

The reward for worship in times of tribulation is similar to emigrating to Madīnah.

I have seen nothing but benefit in speaking about the Qur'ān and H̲adīth. I have never seen any harm in presenting the Qur'ān and H̲adīth. Nonetheless, this work is not one of hastiness. A person may be residing in one part of a city. He commences the work and it gradually spreads to the rest of the city and has an effect on the people. All we have to do is initiate the work and present an example. When an example is presented, the work becomes easy. People are able to emulate when an example is presented to them. The work is becoming difficult in the absence of an example.

A youngster was travelling by train and he continued performing s̲alāh whenever it was the time of s̲alāh. A man said to him: "I have been watching you for some time. You are still a young man and you are already so particular about s̲alāh and other acts of obedience. What is the reason?" The youngster did not reply but

when the man persisted, he said: “I go frequently to such and such shaykh. This is its effect.”

I say to you people, don’t worry about drawing large numbers of people because that is of no importance in Allāh’s sight. Start with yourself and Allāh *taʿālā* will provide you with helpers and supporters. This has been the norm with the Ahlullāh. I heard Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* saying that there was a saint who always performed his salāh with congregation. He happened to be on a journey and he was all alone. When the time of salāh arrived, he expressed his sorrow thus: “O Allāh! I am going to be deprived from performing salāh with congregation today.” Just then an ox-cart driver came to him and said: “Make me a Muslim.” He made him embrace Islam and the two performed salāh with congregation.

Note: Look at the pain with which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* is directing the attention of the ʿulamā’ and mashā’ikh towards rectification of the ummat. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him, and may He create within us the concern for our rectification and the rectification of the ummat. Āmīn. (compiler)

There was a Khān Sāhib to whom Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to be very considerate. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say: “This Khān Sāhib accepted me at a time when there was no one else.”

The same Khān Sāhib used to present many gifts to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would say to him: “Khān Sāhib! Enough now, this is too much.” The Khān Sāhib would clasp his hands, stand up and say: “Hadrat, I remember my early days when I used to wander about in the marketplaces. Allāh *taʿālā* enabled me to progress through the blessings of your duʿā’s. So all this really belongs to you.” (This is a sign of sincerity and love).

There was another Khān Sāhib who was very close to Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā had a lot of time for him. Some people must have found it objectionable and must have thought to themselves, how does Hadrat Maulānā allow a person who does not comply with the Sharīʿat to be so close to him? But Hadrat was focussed on the man's heart and he knew that he is having an effect on him. He was waiting for the right moment. One when Hadrat was making preparations for jumuʿah, he held his hand and said: "O Khān Sāhib! We are very good friends. It doesn't seem appropriate that my appearance and your appearance be different. I will therefore remove my beard, and you must give me a set of your clothes which I will wear. We will then go together to perform salāh." Khān Sāhib said: "Hadrat! What are you saying!? How can I allow you to wear my clothes!? Here, I am not going to shave my beard from today, and you must give me a set of your clothes. I will wear them and we will go together for salāh." The Khān Sāhib was rectified from that day. The people realized that Hadrat had been working on him from the inside from a long time but did not say anything to him because he was waiting for the right moment.

I say, can a person ever be destroyed if he holds on to the hands of the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*? They will also hold our hands on the day of Resurrection. The Auliyā' – the righteous believers – will intercede. The Sufis contributed immensely. No sooner they saw weakness in Dīn in any part of the world, they went to that place.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā Multānī *rahimahullāh* came here from Baghdad after receiving an indication from the unseen from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* When he came to Multān and settled down there, the

mashā'ikh of the city got together and sent him a cup which was filled to the brim with milk. H̲ad̲rat placed a flower on the top of the milk and sent the same cup back with the attendant who brought it. Those who were present were astonished and did not understand what was happening. Why did he return the gift? And that too by placing a flower on it!? Someone took the courage and asked him: "H̲ad̲rat, what is the meaning of all this? We do not understand." He said: "The mashā'ikh sent me a message that just as this cup is filled with milk [and there is no place for more], this land is filled with mashā'ikh. There is no place here for me, I should therefore go back [to Baghdad]. I replied by saying that there is certainly no place for more milk or water in this cup, but there is a place for a flower to be placed on it. I demonstrated this to them by placing a flower, and indirectly informed them that I will live like a flower among them – i.e. they will experience no harm or loss because of me."

The mashā'ikh were most happy with this subtle reply. They acknowledged H̲ad̲rat's knowledge and virtue, and developed confidence in him. Allāh *taʿālā* then enabled him to be of immense benefit to this country.

There are many incidents of this nature about the mashā'ikh. There is a need to continue relating such incidents and listening to them. Inshā Allāh, the ummat will benefit.

LOVE FOR ALLĀH AND DESIRES OF THE SELF (10)

Love for Allāh *taʿālā* is of two types: compulsory and desirable.

Shaykh Ibn H̲ajar ʿAsqalānī *rah̲imahullāh* – the author of *Fath̲ al-Bārī* – says that compulsory love is the one which prompts a person to carry out Allāh's orders, abstain from His prohibitions, and be pleased with divine decree. We learn from this that if a person does all these things then the element of love is certainly found in him because in their absence, it is not possible for a person to carry out orders and abstain from prohibitions. The author adopted a most easy definition which can be understood by all. If a person is seen to be pleased with divine decree, is abstaining from disobediences and carrying out orders; it will be concluded that he has love for Allāh *taʿālā* within him. It is impossible for him to do all this without love.

You probably did not hear before this that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is compulsory. You love your children, you love your wife, you love your wealth, you may also be frequenting the mashā'ikh, but you have no concern about the fundamental (i.e. love for Allāh *taʿālā*). When people are cut off from the fundamental thing, they remain deprived even after frequenting the mashā'ikh. This is because they consider frequenting the mashā'ikh to be the fundamental, while the love of Allāh *taʿālā* which is compulsory, they have no knowledge of it nor do they want to learn anything about it. It would have been better for such people to

remain at home. What was the need for them to come here?

In my student days I observed that there were only a handful of students who really studied with understanding. The majority of them understood nothing, and the time which was for real work was whiled away heedlessly. In the same way, people remain heedless even after coming onto this path. In other words, they neither come with any quest nor does it seem that they have a concern to develop it. The rule is that a person without a quest remains deprived.

A person used to complain to Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* about his deplorable condition by saying that he has no love within him. (This shows that the man was worried about this loss in him, this is why he mentioned it to his shaykh. Now the situation is such that people will remain with the mashā'ikh but they do not worry about their bad condition nor do they show any concern). The man also said: "Hadrat, when I think to myself that I have not acquired love for Allāh *taʿālā*, it has an effect on me and I think of the following description given by Allāh *taʿālā*:

نَارُ اللهِ الْمُوْقَدَةُ الَّتِيْ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْاَفْئِدَةِ

It is a fire kindled by Allāh. Which leaps over the hearts.[1]

Look at how the man expressed his quest and thirst to Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, and said that he is lying in the fire of separation [from Allāh *taʿālā*], and is at a loss over the fact that his heart is devoid of Allāh's

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[1] Sūrah al-Humazah, 104: 6-7.

love. He added: “When everyone falls asleep, I walk about with worry and concern.”

Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* asked him: “How did you conclude that you have no love in you? Have you seen anyone acquiring love?” He replied: “Yes, I did have that love and I got it from you. But I lost it because of my evil actions.” The man added: “Love is an emotional thing; when it is in a person, he perceives it. It is like hunger and thirst.” When the man said that he did have love, he had acquired it from Hadrat, and lost it because of his evil actions; Hadrat *rahimahullāh* remained silent.

A genuine seeker experiences pain when he finds that he has no love; and this is how it ought to be. After all, the greatest divine gift in this world is the love for Allāh *taʿālā*. When He confers the slightest bit of it to a person, the man has triumphed. Now you people must not get alarmed, I am explaining this subject very carefully to you, even though it is a difficult subject. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* states in *Qasd as-Sabīl* that as long as such a person about whom we are discussing does not become firm and resolute, he must not occupy himself in teaching the internal and external aspects of the Tarīqat. Instead, he must remain anonymous and unknown.

I have been explaining this subject to you for several days now – that just as there are other compulsory actions, love for Allāh *taʿālā* is also compulsory. Speaking about Allāh *taʿālā* and reaching Allāh *taʿālā* is done by the Ahlullāh, and it is only they who can really speak about these things. If any other person wants to do this, he will not be able to do it. Even if he does it through the power of his knowledge, it will not have any effect. It is the Ahlullāh who know these

matters through which a quest is created and developed. If others try it, they will not succeed.

This is similar to a person who wants to teach in a madrasah. He will have to study, and study with understanding, he will have to develop the necessary capabilities within him; only then can he become a teacher. The same applies here. A person will have to develop the necessary capabilities to acquire the sciences of this place. The experts of the Ṯarīqat say that as long as a person does not acquire spiritual affinity, he must neither occupy himself in spiritual nor external teaching. In other words, he must not even deliver talks and lectures. This is because before he can even acquire spiritual affinity, he will be focusing on these things [talks, lectures, assemblies, etc.]. Once position, wealth, popularity, etc. become his objectives, the acquisition of Allāh's pleasure and rewards in the Hereafter will no longer be the goals.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* said in his *Mathnawī* that certain qualities and attributes are reserved for Allāh *taʿālā* alone while others are for the creation. However, love is that one quality which is found in both.

يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّوْنَهُ

Allāh loves them and they love Him.

The masses and laity are better than us. We study the Qur'ān and H̲adīth but we still have not freed ourselves from the desires of our carnal selves. The fact of the matter is that every task is accomplished by a catalyst, and the catalyst here is love. When it is found, the Qur'ān will have an effect on him, the H̲adīth will have an effect on him, and he will be able to free himself from the dictates of his carnal self. If

not, it will be very difficult for him. If these points are taught to Muslims, they will certainly learn them. Many people know that salāh and fasting are necessary actions. If we stress on them that love for Allāh *taʿālā* is also necessary, they will learn it and acquire it.

Heedlessness is the fundamental ailment

In order for Allāh's love to be realized, it is necessary that there be no heedlessness. Heedlessness is a major obstacle, in fact, the fundamental ailment. Heedlessness with regard to Allāh *taʿālā* is forbidden under every condition. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproves of it. He says:

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ

The time of their reckoning has drawn near to the people, yet they are slinking away heedlessly.[1]

I believe that heedlessness has enveloped the people, and it is the Ahlullāh alone who can remove it. It has always been their programme and system to first remove heedlessness from the heart while they themselves keep away from the causes of heedlessness. This is why they intermingle and interact with worldly people only when necessary. There was a king who had a lot of faith and confidence in a certain saint. He said to him one day: "Hadrat, you must come to my fort occasionally and perform salāh there so that we will acquire some blessings." The saint became angry at this and said: "I have just salāh left and you want to buy that as well!? I will not perform salāh there."

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[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 1.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to speak a lot about love, abstaining from heedlessness and so on. These are things which we used to hear there, and that is why seekers used to go to him. Now it is not possible for every person to reach that level. Only the one who is chosen by Allāh *taʿālā* can acquire it. The one whom Allāh *taʿālā* chose for His love is His special friend.

Just as disobedience is forbidden, so is heedlessness. As for love – whose other name is spiritual affinity – its acquisition is compulsory. An indication of it is obedience. It is not possible for a person to have love and still be disobedient. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

رِجَالٌ ۙ لَّا تُلْهِيْهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ

Men whom neither trade nor sale can divert from the remembrance of Allāh.[1]

They are engaged in trade but they are still remembering Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what the Sufis refer to as solitude in public. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related that a certain saint observed a man engaged in business amounting to 50-60 thousand rupees, while his heart was not unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā* for a single moment. Do you know what that is? When a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is created in the heart, it is not possible for trade, wife and children to cause him to become heedless.

A poet says:

> How can someone else enter my heart when my thoughts are focused on my Beloved all the time!?

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[1] Sūrah an-Nūr, 24: 37.

A sign of spiritual affiliation

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says that there are two signs of spiritual affiliation. One is remembrance and the other is obedience. This spiritual affiliation is also known as love. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* is trying to make us understand that we cannot move forward without love – whether it be worldly or Dīnī. It is through love alone that one will be able to train and rectify one's wife and children, and fulfil their rights. You can see the effects of the absence of love – no one bothers about anyone. Even children do not bother about their parents. There is constant arguing and bickering between husband and wife. In the same way, the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* can only be fulfilled through love. Without it, it is not possible to carry out His orders and to abstain from His prohibitions. The absence of love results in evil actions and disobediences.

I now conclude this topic of love with the following duʿā's of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَتَرْكَ الْمُنْكَرَاتِ، وَحُبَّ الْمَسَاكِيْنِ، وَاَنْ تَغْفِرَ لِيْ وَتَرْحَمَنِيْ، وَاِذَا اَرَدْتَّ بِقَوْمٍ فِتْنَةً فَتَوَفَّنِيْ غَيْرَ مَفْتُوْنٍ، وَّاَسْاَلُكَ حُبَّكَ وَحُبَّ مَنْ يُّحِبُّكَ، وَحُبَّ عَمَلٍ يُّقَرِّبُ اِلٰى حُبِّكَ

O Allāh! I ask You the ability to do good deeds and to abandon evil deeds. [I ask You] love for the poor and that You forgive me and have mercy on me. If You decide to send a calamity to a people, cause me to die before I fall into that calamity. I ask You for Your love, the love of the person who loves You, and the love of a deed which would draw me closer to Your love.

THE QUR'ĀN WAS REVEALED FOR GUIDANCE

Allāh *taʿālā* revealed the Qur'ān for guidance and He sent Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. Allāh *taʿālā* left out nothing in His Book. He explained to us fully about His Being, His attributes and His actions. He also explained to us who we are, what we were created from, and what changes took place in us. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ مَّكِيْنٍ. ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ق ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ط فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخٰلِقِيْنَ.

We created man from the essence of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of sperm in a safe enclosure. Then We made the drop of sperm into a clot of blood, then We made the clot of blood into a piece of flesh, then We made out of that piece of flesh, bones, then We clothed the bones with meat, then We brought him forth in a new form. Blessed, therefore, is Allāh, the best of creators.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* also explained in full the difference between guidance and misguidance. He left no room for confusion and doubts. He refers to the Qur'ān as:

هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 12-14.

A guidance for those who fear Allāh.

In another place He says:

وَكَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيٰتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِيْنَ سَبِيْلُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ

In this way We expound the verses in detail so that the way of the sinners may be exposed.[1]

In short, the conditions of the obedient servants and the sinners are described in the Qur'ān so that the way of both may be made clear. In this way, the path of the obedient servants can be followed and the path of the disobedient ones discarded.

Since Allāh *taʿālā* has clearly explained both paths, there remains no need for any speech after the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*. However, when a nation is headed for misguidance, it discards the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* and of its Messenger, and chooses to follow the speech of people who are just like it. I am observing at present that people are not paying even one hundredth attention to the word of Allāh *taʿālā* when compared to the attention and interest which they are showing to the compositions of poets and the literati. They are prepared to furnish the writings of these people as proofs and evidences, but not the word of Allāh *taʿālā*.

I say, the person who has the slightest affinity with the Qur'ān and has some sort of intelligence will be able to conclude that poems are nothing in comparison to the Qur'ān. One of the objective of sending the Qur'ān was because of the passionate interest which Arabs had in poetry. They were experts in this field and they used to devote all their strength to it. They used to express their false imaginations

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 55.

and misguidance in poetry. They were proud about their eloquence to the extent that they referred to non-Arabs and ʿajam (a person who is dumb). The Qur'ān was revealed to shift their focus from poetry. Consequently, they turned their attention away from poetry within a short time and became enamoured by the Qur'ān. They spent their intellectual and mental capabilities in pondering and reflecting over the Qur'ān. Subsequently, their power of thinking, reflection, understanding and their intelligence progressed by leaps and bounds. This happened because the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* had full īmān in the Qur'ān and affirmed it totally. Allāh *taʿālā* encourages us to think and reflect over the Qur'ān, and reprimands us for not doing this. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُوْنَ الْقُرْآنَ اَمْ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَقْفَالُهَا

Do they not ponder over the Qur'ān, or are there locks on their hearts?[1]

اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَايَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

Surely in this are signs for a people who reflect.

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ؕ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُوْنَ

Say: How can the blind and the seeing be equal? Do you not ponder?[2]

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[1] Sūrah Muh̲ammad, 47: 24.

[2] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 50.

Contemplating on the Qur'ān

Just as the Saḥābah *raḏiyallāhu 'anhum* followed the injunctions of the Qur'ān with heart and soul, they pondered and reflected over it. Consequently, they enjoyed worldly and Dīnī success. What an unfortunate situation that Allāh *ta'ālā* is instructing us to ponder and contemplate over His speech but we are caught up with its words only. This marked the fall of our nation. The Qur'ān is the sole means and guarantor of guidance. When guidance is sought from others, we can never be guided. Instead, it will result in Allāh's severe displeasure.

No dhikr is superior to Allāh's speech

It is the duty of all the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh to guide the Muslim nation and rectify it through the Qur'ān and Sunnat. They must teach people the Qur'ān and created an affinity and interest for it in their hearts. If they do not do this, the nation will deviate from the path. It will then become very difficult to bring it back onto the path, as is experienced nowadays. We have to encourage the masses to read the Qur'ān. Our past scholars did a lot to encourage people to read the Qur'ān. Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* compiled the statements of Hadrat Khwājah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh*. One of his statements are:

> No dhikr is superior to Allāh's speech. It ought to be recited, and the results which it brings are superior to all others acts of obedience.

Just look at this statement of Hadrat Khwājah Bābā Farīd Ganj Shakkar *rahimahullāh* as quoted by Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* then quoted it in one

of his writings. This shows that these seniors unanimously agree on this statement. The point I am making is that all the senior saints turned our focus on reading the Qur'ān. This is because Allāh *taʿālā* repeatedly speaks of fear and hope. Just by reading the verses of fear and hope without understanding those verses, a person develops fear and hope. Fear and hope are the most superior states of the heart. It is now the job of the ʿulamā' and it ought to be their job to encourage people towards the Qur'ān. They must present the Qur'ān and Sunnat to them because Muslims unanimously accept these two and believe in them. They cannot object to these two sources.

However, the Qur'ān and Sunnat have to be presented in the correct manner. The way of doing this is for the ʿulamā' to first develop an affinity and interest in the Qur'ān and Sunnat. Only then can they achieve anything. There is no dearth in the Qur'ān, but when do we ever turn our attention to it? The absence of this interest has resulted in our failure despite making so many efforts. There is a dire need for ʿulamā' to first follow the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and then direct the attention of others to them. As for following the desires of the carnal self – which is essentially a trait of the unbelievers – the ʿulamā' must first remove it from themselves and then make efforts to remove it from others. Allāh *taʿālā* disparages the quality of following desires as follows:

اَفَرَاَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً.

Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity. And Allāh, knowing him as such, led him astray and

set a seal upon his ears and his heart, and cast darkness over his eyes.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ

Who can be more astray than he who follows his desires without any guidance from Allāh?[2]

There are many verses of this type in the Qur'ān. They demonstrate the extreme reprehensibility of following the carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* has full knowledge of the self and its desires and inclinations (after all, He created it). Therefore no speech can explain it better than Him. Even a hundred thousand poets cannot reach there. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* would often quote the following couplet in praise of the Qur'ān and the Sharīʿat:

> Whenever I look at anyone or anything from head to toe, my heart tugs at me and says that this is what you ought to look at [i.e. the Qur'ān and the Sharīʿat].

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful couplet! Hadrat fully understood the application of this couplet; there can be nothing better to apply it to. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand the Qur'ān. Āmīn. (compiler)

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 23.

[2] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 50.

THE QUR'ĀN IS THE GREATEST ADMONISHER

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَآءَتْكُمْ مَّوْعِظَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَآءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُوْرِ ۙ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

O people! An admonition has come to you from your Lord, and a cure for the disease that is in the hearts, and a guidance and a mercy for the Muslims.[1]

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* first read the above verse, then placed tafsīr *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* in front of him and commenced his talk. He said:

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* addresses mankind in general and says to them: O mankind! There has come to you a Book which is an admonishment from among the many admonishments of your Lord. This admonition is for your training and rectification – it has come as a rectifier to you. The Qur'ān is after all the greatest guide, mentor, reminder and admonisher. When Allāh *taʿālā* is Himself delivering a lecture, there can be no greater lecture than it. Look at the powerful themes which Allāh *taʿālā* combined in this one verse. And look at the attributes of the Qur'ān which it mentions – this Qur'ān is an admonisher and a cure for the ailments of the heart, it is a guide, and it is a conveyor to Allāh's close proximity.

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 57.

Look at the excellent manner in which the exegetes are explaining this verse. They certainly fathom the intent of Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* (ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh*) says that the guidance mentioned in this verse means that there has come to you a Book from your Lord which combines these benefits. It fully explains evil and good actions, encourages you towards good actions and stops you from evil actions. It expounds true sciences, removes the ailments of doubts and misgivings, and corrects erroneous beliefs. It steers a person towards the path of truth and conviction, and guides him towards proofs and evidences from the universe and from within man himself. It is a source of mercy for the believers. Through it, they gain salvation from the darkness of unbelief and misguidance, and they move towards the light of īmān. Also because of it, they gain salvation from the different levels of Hell and reach the lofty ranks of Paradise.

To sum up, the Qur'ān is an admonisher because it contains themes of encouragement and warnings, and reprimands against sins. It is a cure because the ailments which people have in their chests – ailments like ignorance, doubts, polytheism, hypocrisy, etc. – are cured through it. It is a guide and mentor because it clearly expounded what is appropriate and what is not, what is permissible and what is not, what is halāl and what is harām. In this way, it made the path of truth absolutely clear. It is a conveyor to the level of proximity because salvation is obtained through it, and reaching Paradise is possible via it.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* then quotes the statements of some of the erudite scholars who say that this verse makes reference to the fact that there are several levels through which man can reach

perfect as regards his self. The one who holds on firmly to the Qur'ān reaches those levels. The first point in this regard is that the external self must be cultured by abstaining from inappropriate actions. The word *mauʿiẕah* (admonition) makes reference to this aspect because it contains a warning against sins. In other words, the Qur'ān contains statements which state what man should not be doing with his hands and legs, eyes and tongue, etc. A believer is fearful of doing them and casts them aside. This results in a culturing of his external self. This is also one level of piety or taqwā.

The second point is that the internal self is cultured and cleared from corrupt beliefs and wicked capabilities. Reference to this point is made in the words: "a cure for the disease that is in the hearts".

The third point is that the self is embellished with true beliefs and virtuous character. This cannot be acquired without guidance. The words "and a guidance" make reference to this.

The fourth is the manifestation of Allāh's mercy. This is mentioned in the words "and a mercy for the believers". This is specifically for those perfect selves who, after acquiring internal and external perfection, are ready and prepared for it. In short, the Qur'ān encompasses all the levels of perfection for the human self.

Imām Rāzī *raẖimahullāh* says that the word *mauʿiẕah* makes reference to the purification of the inappropriate external actions of people and conveying them to purification. This is known as the Sharīʿat because it explains what is appropriate and what is not, what is permissible and what is not, and what is ẖalāl and what is not. The word *shifā'* (cure) alludes to the purification of the souls from false beliefs and

deplorable characteristics. This is known as the Tarīqat. The word *hudā* (guidance) makes reference to the emergence of the truth in the hearts of the siddīqīn (the truthful ones). In other words, when a person reaches the level of sīddīqīyyat (truthfulness), the truth emanates from his heart and this is the reality. The word *rahmat* (mercy) means that the person has reached such a lofty level of perfection and excellence, that he is able to perfect others and convey his blessings to them. This is the rank of prophethood and khilāfat. It refers to acceptance which is linked to Allāh-recognition.

ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī *rahimahullāh* says that this verse shows that just as the Qur'ān is a cure for spiritual ailments of the heart, it is a cure for physical and bodily ailments. Hadrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that a person came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained of a pain in his chest. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him:

إقرأ القرآن، يقول الله تعالى وشفاء لما في الصدور.

Read the Qur'ān. Allāh taʿālā says: "and a cure for a disease which is in the hearts".

Another narration states that a man came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and complained about a pain in his throat. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him:

عليك بقراءة القرآن

Be regular in reading the Qur'ān.

After quoting the above, ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* says that we certainly cannot deny the blessing of the

Qur'ān because it is possible for Allāh *taʿālā* to remove physical ailments and bodily pains through the Qur'ān. However, it is not correct to furnish this verse as a proof to show that the Qur'ān is a cure for physical ailments. The previously quoted Hadīth can be explained as follows: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was informed via divine revelation that this person has a spiritual malady in his heart which has become the cause of the physical ailment which he is experiencing. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered him to read the Qur'ān. In this way, once the spiritual ailment of his heart is removed, the physical ailment which was because of the former will also be removed.

Spiritual maladies sometimes cause physical ailments

It is not far-fetched to assume that spiritual maladies sometimes become the causes of physical ailments. We see jealousy and malice sometimes becoming the causes of physical ailments. There is an Arabic saying:

لله تعالى درُّ الحسد، ما أَعْدَلَهُ بدأ بصاحبه فقتله

It is due solely to the jealousy for Allāh's sake. Look at how just and equitable He is in the sense that it was born from the person, and it killed him.

Let me give you another example. A person said to me: "I am angry because I have a weak mind." I said: "No, you have a weak mind because of anger." In other words, you become angry and this has caused your mind to get weak. Anger is like a fire. When it exceeds the bounds, a person can neither eat nor drink. Consequently, the body itself becomes weak on one side, and the mind and heart become weak on the

other side. This results in various types of physical illnesses and ailments.

The above is the reply of ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* to the explanation of ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūṯī *rahimahullāh*. Let me give you another reply to it. It is possible that physical ailments were cured through the Qur'ān in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, while this is not the case nowadays. What I mean is that because of weakness in īmān and corrupt beliefs, physical ailments are not cured by reading the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

A person came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and asked him about a certain Hadīth, and said that he does not understand it. The man was a scholar. Hadrat Maulānā asked him: "What did you not understand? The meaning of the Hadīth or its basis?" He said: "I do not understand the basis of the Hadīth." Hadrat Maulānā said: "I can present many injunctions which you know but probably do not know their basis. So apply the same to this Hadīth, and do not worry about it." He said: "*Li Yatma'innah Qalbī* – I want to know so that my heart may be satisfied." Hadrat immediately responded: "It is possible that the thing which was a cause for the satisfaction of the heart of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* may not satisfy your heart." He fell silent.

In the same way I said it is possible that the thing which was a cure in the time of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is not a cure in our times.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذٰلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوْا ط هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ

Say: By the grace of Allāh and His beneficence – in this, then, they should rejoice. This is better than all that they amass.[1]

The previous verse was a general address. Here it is directed specifically to Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and he is ordered to say to the people that they must value the grace and mercy of Allāh *taʿālā* which are in the Qur'ān. If they want to rejoice over anything, then this is most worthy of rejoicing over, and not anything else.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rah̲imahullāh* quotes several explanations for the words *fad̲l* and *rah̲mah* (grace and beneficence). H̲ad̲rat Mujāhid *rah̲imahullāh* says that these two words refer to the Qur'ān. H̲ad̲rat Anas *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فضل الله القرآن ورحمته أن جعلكم من أهله.

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that Allāh's grace refers to the Qur'ān, and His mercy [or beneficence] refers to the fact that He made you from the people of the Qur'ān.

وجاء عن جمع أن الفضل القرآن ورحمته الإسلام.

A large number of narrators say that grace refers to the Qur'ān, and mercy refers to Islam.

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أن الفضل العلم والرحمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم.

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 58.

H̲ad̲rat Ibn ʿAbbās rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu says that grace refers to knowledge, and mercy refers to Muh̲ammad s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

هو خير مما يجمعون من الأموال والحرث والأنعام وسائر حطام الدنيا، فإنها سائرة الزوال مشرفة عليه.

It is better than the wealth, agriculture, cattle and all other possessions of this world which they accumulate. This is because all these things are to come to an end. They are on the verge of destruction.

On the other hand, this is the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* [the Qur'ān] which is eternal. Obviously, there can be no comparison between something which is fleeting and something which is eternal.

Now listen further: Allāh *taʿālā* is saying to us that we ought to experience joy and happiness over his grace and mercy, and we must consider them to be superior to this entire world and whatever it contains. However, the people who come to us have such a seal on their hearts that the advice of Allāh *taʿālā* does not have any effect on them. They experience no joy from the Qur'ān. They do not experience any ecstasy at its recitation. But when poems are rendered in a beautiful tone to them, they go into a trance and feel ecstatic. I am telling you that Allāh *taʿālā* is most displeased at this. He is watching us and saying: "I sent My Qur'ān to them, but they experience no ecstasy from it. They do not make it a source of blessings. They do not purify their internal and external selves through it. But they thoroughly enjoy the speech and writings of people." We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

It is most unfortunate that the Book of Allāh *taʿālā* is with us yet there is so much of deviation, and so much of disregard for the Qur'ān.

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

In other words, a person went to the Kaʿbah but his love for his idols remained in his heart. In the same way, the Qur'ān is present with us but we did not purify our beliefs, our character, our thinking, and all the deplorable qualities of our carnal self through it. We have not tasted the sweetness of the recitation of the Qur'ān, and we did not experience ecstasy at its recitation. It is on such occasions that I quote this couplet:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The Ahlullāh experienced the most ecstasy and elation from the Qur'ān, had the most belief and conviction in it, and considered it to be most effective for success in both worlds. They will certainly receive the blessings, fruits and lofty levels in the Hereafter because of their bond with the Qur'ān. Nonetheless, they will be blessed with a pure and wholesome life in this world as well.

THE STORY OF HADRAT MŪSĀ

Allāh *taʿālā* addresses Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* as follows:

وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرٰى. إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلٰى أُمِّكَ مَا يُوْحٰى. أَنِ اقْذِفِيْهِ فِي التَّابُوْتِ فَاقْذِفِيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ الْيَمُّ بِالسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّيْ وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُ ؕ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّيْ ۚ وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلٰى عَيْنِيْ.

We had conferred a favour upon you at another time as well. When We sent Our order to your mother which We describe further on: "Place him into a chest and put it into the river. The river will then cast him ashore. An enemy of Mine and an enemy of his will then take him." I have endowed you with love from Me and so that you may be reared before My eyes.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

إِذْ تَمْشِيْ أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُوْلُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّكْفُلُهُ ؕ فَرَجَعْنٰكَ إِلٰى أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ.

When your sister began walking and saying: "Should I show you a person who will nurse him?" We then returned you to your mother so that her eyes may be cooled and she may not grieve.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Ṯā Hā, 20: 37-39.

[2] Sūrah Ṯā Hā, 20: 40.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh*, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī*, quotes a lengthy narration under this verse. I am quoting its translation verbatim:

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates in a lengthy Hadīth that when Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* removed Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* from the box, and brought him into the house of Pharaoh, she summoned all the wet-nurses who lived nearby so that one of them could be selected as the wet-nurse for Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. (Those women arrived) but he refused to drink the milk of any of them to the extent that Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* began to fear that he might die out of hunger. She ordered for him to be taken into the city where there are large crowds of people, and where they might find a wet-nurse whose milk he will drink. This order was carried out but here too he did not accept the milk of any woman.

While this was carrying on, the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was becoming restless. She forgot the promise which Allāh *taʿālā* had made to her (i.e. do not worry about the child, We will return him to you). She wanted to know if anyone is talking about him, if he has been found, or if he has been eaten by an animal of prey. She sent her daughter to go out and search for him. She must have went some distance when she saw some people searching for a wet-nurse for Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. She went happily to them and said: “I can show you a family which will take care of him and will always desire his wellbeing.” When the people heard her, they apprehended her immediately and said: “How do you know that that family will desire his wellbeing? It seems that you know the child, that is why you are saying this.”

They took her to Pharaoh and laid a complaint against her. She then explained herself by saying: "What I meant is that the family will desire the wellbeing of the king. In their efforts to earn the king's pleasure and payment from him, the family members will treat the child really well." When she said this, the people released her and said: "Very well, tell us where that woman lives?" She went to her mother and related the entire incident to her. When she heard it, she herself went to the palace. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was placed in her lap. The moment he was placed there, he clung to his mother and began drinking her milk until he was fully satisfied.

The people went and conveyed the good news to Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* and informed her that they had found a wet-nurse for the child. She called for the wet-nurse. She and Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* were brought and presented before her. When she personally saw whatever information was conveyed to her, she said to the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "You must live here with me and breast-feed this child because I love him intensely (I cannot tolerate being separated from him)."

The mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "I too have children and other domestic responsibilities. I cannot leave my children and allow them to be neglected. If I feed your child, I will do it with the best of my abilities. I will not hold back from doing whatever good I can do for him. If you accept, you can let me take this child to my house. If not, I will leave because I cannot desert my children who are at home."

At the time when she was conversing with Hadrat Āsiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* remembered Allāh's promise to her (of

returning her child to her). She was fully convinced that Allāh *taʿālā* will certainly fulfil His promise. This is why she did not adopt a soft and lenient approach in her conversation. Instead, she spoke to Pharaoh's wife with self-confidence. Consequently, Hadrat Āsiyah had no alternative but to agree to handing over Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to her. His mother took him and left for her house there and then.

Allāh *taʿālā* caused him to grow up excellently and protected him fully because Allāh *taʿālā* had already decreed prophet-hood for him. When he grew up a little, Pharaoh's wife requested the mother of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to see him. His mother promised to bring him some day. Hadrat Āsiyah said to her representatives and treasurers: "When he arrives, you must receive him with gifts and presents. I am going to observe how you welcome him. In fact, I will appoint a supervisor who will watch how each one of you receives him and welcomes him."

The moment Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* emerged from his house, gifts and presents were sent to him. People received him with full honour and respect until he reached the palace and presented himself before Hadrat Āsiyah. She too received him honourably, presented gifts to him, and was overjoyed. His mother also received many gifts because she had rendered her services in a most excellent manner. Hadrat Āsiyah then took Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to Pharaoh so that he too may pay his respects to him and present him with gifts. This is when that incident occurred which was mentioned previously.

The author is referring to the incident which he had related in his commentary to the verse: "Loosen the knot from my tongue." The incident is as follows:

It is said that Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* had an impediment in his speech and the reason for it was that he had placed an ember in his mouth when he was a child. What had happened was that Pharaoh had placed him in his lap. Pharaoh had jewels and gem stones placed in his beard. These were glittering. A child is normally attracted to such things, so Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* extended his hands and held Pharaoh's beard. Another narration says that he struck Pharaoh with his hand. Yet another narration states that he had a knife in his hand and he used it to strike Pharaoh on his head.

Pharaoh took a bad omen from this action and thought to himself that he is going to be humiliated at his hands. He became angry and summoned his executioner. When Hadrat Āsiyah observed what was happening, she became terrified because she loved Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. She said to Pharaoh: "Have you become so carried away by a child's action!? He is a small child who cannot even differentiate between a sapphire and an ember. How will he ever humiliate you?" She brought a red ember and a red sapphire and placed it before him. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was about to strike his hand on the sapphire but Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* turned his hand towards the ember. He grabbed it and put it into his mouth. His tongue got burnt and a blister developed on that spot.

One question which crops up here is that how come the hand with which he grabbed the ember did not get burnt, yet his tongue got burnt with it? The 'ulamā' explain Allāh's wisdom in this regard and say that the same hand was to become the means of Pharaoh's humiliation. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* protected it from getting burnt. Not only that, Allāh gave him the

miracle of the glittering hand. And the reason why the tongue was affected is that – as is the norm with children – he had addressed Pharaoh as “dear father” or some other similar manner of addressing him.

According to another narration, Hadrat Mūsā’s hand also got burnt. Pharaoh did his utmost to treat and cure it but he did not succeed. The probable wisdom behind this was so that he will eat on his own and not join him in eating from the same utensil. Subsequently, when Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* invited him to Allāh *taʿālā*, Pharaoh asked: “Which God are you inviting me to?” Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* replied: “To the one Allāh who cured my hand while you had failed to cure it.”[1]

No matter what, everything happens through divine decree.

لِيَقْضِيَ اللهُ اَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُوْلًا

So that a matter which Allāh decreed may come to pass.

Incidents from the life of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* are related in several places in the Qur’ān. The beginning of Sūrah al-Qasas contains some incidents from his life. These cover many verses:

نَتْلُوْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِ مُوْسٰى وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ. اِنَّ فِرْعَونَ عَلَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ اَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ اَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِيْ نِسَآءَهُمْ، اِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ. وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ

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[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī*, p. 166.

اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ اَئِمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ. وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

We relate to you some incidents about Mūsā and Pharaoh, setting forth the truth for those people who have conviction. Pharaoh had exalted himself in the land and had made its people into sects. He had suppressed one group of them: slaughtering their sons and keeping alive their women. Surely he was of those who spread corruption. It is Our will to favour those who were suppressed in the land and to make them leaders and to make them heirs. And to establish them in the land and to show to Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies that which they feared at their [Banī Isrā'īl's] hands.[1]

It is mentioned in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* that Pharaoh massacred the sons of the Banī Isrā'īl because an astrologer had informed him that soon a child from the Banī Isrā'īl will be born through whom his kingdom will collapse, and the Banī Isrā'īl will take possession of the land. It is also said that Pharaoh saw a dream in which a fire came from the direction of Bayt al-Maqdis and reduced Egypt to ashes. In this fire, only the Copts got burnt while the Banī Isrā'īl were safe and sound. Pharaoh consulted his scholars and asked them for an interpretation of the dream. They said that a person will be born in the city at whose hands Egypt will be destroyed. This is when Pharaoh began massacring the new-borns of the Banī Isrā'īl.

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[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 3-6

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī says: Look at the foolishness of Pharaoh! If what the astrologers said was true, it would have certainly happened. Of what benefit would there be in killing the children? And if they were lying, then what was the need to kill the children? Another point we learn from this verse is that massacring children for the sake of preserving the country is a Pharaonic trait.

وَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلٰى اُمِّ مُوْسٰى اَنْ اَرْضِعِيْهِ، فَاِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْقِيْهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِيْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِيْ، اِنَّا رَآدُّوْهُ اِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ. فَالْتَقَطَهُ فِرْعَوْنُ لِيَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَّحَزَنًا، اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا كَانُوْا خٰطِئِيْنَ. وَقَالَتْ امْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّيْ وَلَكَ لَا تَقْتُلُوْهُ. عَسٰى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ.

We sent an order to Mūsā’s mother saying: “Continue breast-feeding him. Then when you fear over his life, cast him into the river, and have no fear and do not grieve. We will return him to you and make him one of the Messengers.” Pharaoh’s family then picked him up so that he may be their enemy and a source of their grief. Surely Pharaoh, Hāmān and their armies were in error. Pharaoh’s wife said: “This [child] is a joy to the eye for me and you. Do not kill him, perhaps he may be of use to us or we may adopt him as a son.” And they knew nothing [of what he was to become].[1]

It is mentioned in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* that when the mother of H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* began experiencing labour pains, she called one of the mid-wives who were appointed by the government to keep watch over

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[1] Sūrah al-Qas̲as̲, 28: 7-9.

the pregnant women of the Banī Isrā'īl. The mid-wife commenced her work and the moment Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was born and fell to the ground, the mid-wife saw a light emanating from between his eyes. This caused her to tremble from head to toe and she immediately fell in love with the infant. Her love for him prevented her from informing the king of the birth of this child. She said to the mother that she must protect the child. However, this was a royal decree so when she was about to leave the house, the spies of Pharaoh surrounded the house. The mid-wife was terrified. She quickly wrapped the child in some rags, placed him in the oven, and left the house. She was so terrified and frightened that she didn't know what else to do. The police entered, searched the house, found nothing and were forced to leave.

After they left, the mother became worried about her child and did not know where he was. Then from the oven she heard the sound of her child crying. She went to the oven and found Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* lying there. Allāh *taʿālā* had caused the fire to become cool and peaceful for him. She removed him from the oven and began taking care of him. Several months passed in this way.

In the meantime, this was the period which the astrologers had predicted for the birth of the child. When no such child could be found, Pharaoh intensified the search and the rules for the search were made more stringent. Now the mother too feared that her child will be found and seized. She made a box, placed Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* in it, and put the box in the River Nile. The slave girls of Hadrat Āsiyah had gone to take a bath in the river, and they saw the box. They carried it out and brought it to Āsiyah thinking that there is some treasure in it.

When the box was opened and Hadrat Āsiyah set her eyes on Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, she was immediately overtaken by love for him. When Pharaoh was informed, he wanted to kill the child but Hadrat Āsiyah convinced him not to kill him.

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Pharaoh had a daughter. Another reason why Pharaoh showed affection towards Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was that he suffered from chronic leprosy which the doctors failed to treat. Someone said to him: Something similar to a human will emerge from the river on a certain day at a certain time, and come to you. If you take its saliva and apply it to the white spots on your body, they will be cleared. Pharaoh's daughter overheard this. Pharaoh was waiting for that day. When it arrived, Pharaoh together with his troops and wife, Hadrat Āsiyah, went to the river. They noticed a box approaching which flowed towards the bank and got stuck against a tree. Pharaoh ordered for it to be brought to him. They tried to open it but failed. They tried to break it but couldn't. Hadrat Āsiyah said: "Bring it here, let me have a look." She noticed a hole and through it she could see something glittering inside. She tried opening it from that hole, and it opened. She saw a small child sucking his thumb from which milk was flowing. A light was shining from between the child's eyes. Allāh *taʿālā* placed love for the child in not only her heart, but in the heart of everyone who beheld him. He became the beloved of everyone. Pharaoh's daughter remembered the reason why they were waiting for this child. She took the child's saliva and

rubbed it on Pharaoh’s white spots. He was cured immediately.[1]

[1] *Rū<u>h</u> al-Maʿānī.*

THE ADMONITORY STORY OF <u>H</u>A<u>D</u>RAT YŪNUS

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and his people in the Qur'ān. It is a most admonitory story. Allāh's punishment had come to his people but they repented with utmost sincerity and devotion. Allāh *taʿālā* was merciful to them and lifted the punishment from them.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ اٰمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَآ إِيْمَانُهَآ إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُوْنُسَ ط لَمَّآ اٰمَنُوْا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ إِلٰى حِيْنٍ.

Why, then, was there not a town which believed, so that its belief may have been of use to it, except the people of Yūnus? When they believed, We raised from them the humiliating punishment in this worldly life and profited them for a while.[1]

The story of the people of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* as related by ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* was sent to the land of Mo<u>s</u>ul, to the people of Nīnawā. The people of this place were polytheists and unbelievers. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* invited them towards belief in Allāh *taʿālā* and he himself refused to worship their idols. This is why they rejected and belied <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 98.

We learn from this that after they repented and embraced īmān, they also received worldly progress. (compiler)

Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. He informed them that Allāh's punishment will befall them after three days. In the middle of the third night, he separated himself from these people. The next morning, Allāh's punishment encompassed them and was hovering above their heads.

Another narration states that a pitch black cloud covered the sky, a fierce smoke blew and surrounded the entire town. The roofs of the buildings turned black. When the people were convinced of Allāh's punishment, they went to look for their Prophet but could not find him.

They eventually took their women, children and animals out to the desert. They wore sack-like clothes [to demonstrate their submission] and repented. They separated the offspring from the mothers of both humans and animals. This caused an intense yearning from both sides – the mothers for their offspring, and the offspring for their mothers. Their voices were raised due to crying profusely and they began screaming. They turned to Allāh *taʿālā* with full devotion, submission and sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* felt sorry for them and accepted their invocations. The punishment which had come to them was removed. That day was the day of ʿĀshūrā', and a Friday.

H̲ad̲rat Ibn Masʿūd *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* says that their repentance was of such a high level that they even set right the wrongs which they had committed against each other. To the extent that if they built buildings with rocks which belonged to someone else, they dug those rocks and returned them to their rightful owners.

According to one narration of H̲ad̲rat Qatādah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* these people continued crying and

repenting before Allāh *taʿālā* for 40 days until the punishment was removed.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* relates in *Kitāb az-Zuhd* and Ibn Jarīr *rahimahullāh* and others relate from Ghaylān that when the punishment enveloped the people of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*, then from their remaining ʿulamā', they went to one shaykh and asked him for his advice with regard to what they should do. He said to them: "You must read this duʿā':

يَا حَيُّ حِيْنَ لَا حَيَّ، وَيَا حَيُّ مُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى، وَيَا حَيُّ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَنْتَ

O the Living when there is no one else living. O the Living, the one who gives life to the dead. O the Living! There is none worthy of worship except You.

When the people read this duʿā', Allāh *taʿālā* removed the punishment from them. Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* said that the people of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* read the following duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّ ذُنُوْبَنَا عَظُمَتْ وَجَلَّتْ، وَاَنْتَ اَعْظَمُ وَاَجَلُّ، فَافْعَلْ بِنَا مَا اَنْتَ اَهْلُهُ، وَلَا تَفْعَلْ بِنَا مَا نَحْنُ اَهْلُهُ.

O Allāh! Our sins are many and too serious, but You are much greater and more almighty. Treat us in a manner which is in line with Your status and do not treat us in a manner which we deserve.

ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* goes on to say that the obvious meaning of the verse informs us that the people had witnessed the punishment, this is why Allāh *taʿālā* used the word *kashafnā* (We raised). Most of the narrations point to this and the majority of the exegetes are also inclined to this meaning. Īmān benefiting a people after observing Allāh's punishment is from among the peculiarities of the people of Hadrat

Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. Normally when unbelievers embrace īmān after observing Allāh’s punishment, then this īmān is referred to as īmān-e-ba’s (īmān out of fear) and it is of no use because the element of accountability has now been removed. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that after the arrival of His punishment, people are destroyed without being given a respite. The destruction of Pharaoh is an example of this.[1]

To embrace īmān after the arrival of Allāh’s punishment, and for the punishment to be removed after a genuine repentance – these are from among the peculiarities of the people of H̲ad̲rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*. Undoubtedly, the manner in which they cried before Allāh *taʿālā* and repented to him was a special feature of this nation. They repented in a manner which was prescribed by the Sharīʿat. The terror which they experienced was not only a natural response but it was due to genuine īmān which had entered their hearts. That īmān demanded that they repent in this manner.

From the previously quoted narrations, we learnt how they undid all their wrongs and acts of oppression, to the extent of digging out the rocks from their buildings and returning them to their rightful owners. This was certainly not a small matter. All the people put on sack-like garments and went out onto the field. They took their wives, children and animals with them. In order to increase their crying and submission, they separated the mothers from their offspring. In this way, the mothers and offspring will cry even more because of the pain of separation. The entire scene would be one of crying and beseeching to Allāh *taʿālā*. They took their animals with them because when

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[1] *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*, p. 170.

Allāh *taʿālā* sees their innocence and blamelessness, He will feel mercy towards them and remove His punishment from them. In this way, the punishment will be removed from the people as well.

Thus, humans, animals, children and offspring – all cried profusely. According to one narration, they cried continuously for 40 days until Allāh *taʿālā* showed His mercy to them, accepted their repentance and removed the punishment.

This is no trivial incident. This story where the punishment was averted is related in the Qur'ān. It is a most unique story. The commentator of *Qasīdah Burdah* related the story of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and his people in great detail. I am quoting it verbatim.

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* was sent to the city of Nīnawā which is near Mosul. The Tigris River flows between these two cities. The residents of this place were idol worshippers. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* spent a long time inviting them towards guidance and the worship of Allāh *taʿālā*, but they did not come onto the straight path. They asked him to produce a fire from water and to keep it burning without any fuel. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* did as they asked but they did not embrace īmān. When he lost hope in their īmān, Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* came to him and said that he must go to his people and inform them that Allāh's punishment is going to descend soon. They still did not believe. That night, Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām*, his wife and his two sons left the city.

Allāh *taʿālā* caused a pitch black cloud to hover above them and black smoke to envelope them. When they saw this, they went in search of Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* but could not find him. They were now convinced of the punishment and began crying before

Allāh *taʿālā,* beseeching Him, and repented from their idol-worship.

In order to attract Allāh's mercy, they separated the mothers from their children, and wore sack-like clothes. They returned to the rightful owners whatever they had seized wrongfully to the extent that they dug out the rocks from the buildings and returned them to their owners. The people went out of the city and began begging and crying to Allāh *taʿālā*.

They said: "O Allāh! We believe in You, in Your Prophet Yūnus and in all the Prophets. Pardon us our sins and remove this punishment from us." Saying this, they all fell into prostration. Allāh ordered the angels of punishment: "Enough. I do not send punishment on monotheists." The people then returned safely to the city as believers. The ʿulamā' differ as to whether a punishment really fell on the people of Ḫaḏrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* or not.

The authentic view is that it did not really befall them.[1] Rather, the effects of the punishment became apparent to them. When they saw this, they repented. Had the punishment really descended, their repentance would not have been accepted. All they saw was a terrifying cloud accompanied by a lot of smoke. The smoke enveloped their city and caused the roofs of their buildings to turn black. Ḫaḏrat wanted to see the condition of his people and learn the nature of the punishment. He met Shayṯān who was in the form of an old dervish. He asked him: "Where are you coming from?" He replied: "From the city of Nīnawā." He asked: "What have the people of the city

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[1] According to the author of *Rūḫ al-Maʿānī* the punishment did descend, as quoted previously.

experienced today?” He replied: “Yūnus informed us of the coming of a punishment, but nothing appeared. We concluded that he lied to us.” Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* became angry and said: “I do not want to go to a city whose people consider me to be a liar.” His wife and two sons were with him. When they reached the Tigris River, he took his elder son across. He returned to take his younger son. When they reached mid-stream, the water was too much and the boy drowned. In the meantime, the elder son who was already across was seized by a wolf. Hadrat got out of the water and ran to free his son from the wolf. The wolf – speaking under the order of Allāh *taʿālā* – said: “O Yūnus! Go back, you will not be able to free your son.”

When he went back, he realized that his wife was not there. He was very saddened and began to cry. He began walking until he reached the ocean. He saw a ship which was about to set sail. The people of the ship felt sorry for him and allowed him to board. When the ship sailed for some distance, it became caught in a storm and was on the verge of sinking. The people got together and said that it seems that there is a criminal on this ship. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* said: “There is a slave on this ship who fled from his master. You cannot be saved unless you cast him into the sea.” Just then a large fish with its mouth wide open was approaching the ship with the intention of swallowing the ship. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* said: “You are suffering these calamities because of me. Cast me into the sea and you will experience calm once again.”

They said: “We cannot do this without drawing a lot. The one whose name appears will have to be cast into the sea.. They drew a lot three times, and the name of

H̲ad̲rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* appeared each time. The Qur'ān makes reference to this as follows:

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِيْنَ

He cast lots and was among the losers.[1]

He was eventually cast into the sea, and a large fish swallowed him immediately. This happened at midnight. He was thus trapped in three forms of darkness: the darkness of the night, the darkness of the sea and the darkness of the belly of the fish. H̲ad̲rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* beseeched Allāh *taʿālā* from the pits of darkness and said:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ صلى إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

There is no deity but You. You are pure of all deficiency. I was of the sinners.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* instructed the fish thus: "You must protect and safeguard H̲ad̲rat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* because he is not your food. Your belly is his prison." According to authentic traditions, he remained in it for 40 days. The fish swam around and reached the place where it had swallowed him. It then swam towards the coast and spewed him out. His condition at the time was like a new born chick which is only bones and flesh. Allāh *taʿālā* caused a pumpkin tree to grow and provide him sustenance. The date was the 7th of Muh̲arram when he emerged from the belly of the fish. Allāh *taʿālā* then ordered a female deer to provide him with milk. He drank of its milk for 40 days and his strength was restored.

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[1] Sūrah as̲-S̲āffāt, 37: 141.

[2] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 87.

He woke up from a dream one day and noticed that the pumpkin tree had turned dry and the deer had fled. He became sad and began to cry. Allāh *taʿālā* said to him: You are crying over a deer which you did not create and a pumpkin tree whose seed you did not plant. Yet you did not cry over the destruction of countless people who were from the progeny of Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*.

An angel then came with two garments, made him wear them, and said: "O Yūnus! Go to your people. They are eager to see you." On his way he came to a village and noticed a man announcing: "I will give 100 gold coins to whoever will take this woman to Nīnawā and convey her to Yūnus ibn Muttā."

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* looked at the woman and realized that it was his wife. He asked the man about the background to the woman. He said that she was sitting on the bank of the river waiting for her husband when a king passed and took her away to his palace. He wanted to commit adultery with her but Allāh *taʿālā* caused his hands and legs to get paralysed. He asked the woman to pray for him to be cured and he will never try to commit evil with her. She prayed and he was cured. The king handed the woman over to me and gave me 100 gold coins for the task of conveying her to Yūnus in Nīnawā. He gave the 100 coins to Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* and handed over the woman to him.

They must have walked a few miles when they came to another village. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw a man on a conveyance with a young boy sitting behind him. When he looked properly, he realized that it was his younger son who had drowned. He took his son, embraced him and cried profusely. The rider asked: "Who are you?" He replied: "I am Yūnus ibn Muttā

and this is my son.” He handed the boy over to him. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* asked him the story about the boy. He said: “I am a fisherman. I cast my net in the Tigris River one day and this boy emerged. He was alive. I heard a voice from the unseen saying: ‘You must take care of the boy. When his father, Yūnus ibn Muttā, comes to you, you must hand the boy over to him.”

They continued on their way and reached the outskirts of the city of Nīnawā. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw a boy herding goats on the main road. The boy was praying thus: “O Allāh! Convey my father to me.” Hadrat looked carefully and saw that it was his elder son. The two embraced each other and cried profusely. The son then said: “O my beloved father! These goats belong to a person in this village. Come with me so that I could hand over these goats to him.” They went into the village. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* saw an old man sitting at the door of his house. The boy said: “This is my father.” The man got up and kissed the hand of Hadrat Yūnus who then asked him: “Do you know the story of this boy?” The old man replied: “Yes. I was grazing these goats when I saw this boy riding on a wolf. The animal brought him to me, placed him down, and spoke – by the order of Allāh – saying: “O shepherd! You must take care of this boy. You must hand him over to Yūnus ibn Muttā when he comes to you because this boy is his son.”

Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* continued on his way. He met a goatherd who was grazing his goats. He asked him for some milk. He replied: “We have not tasted a drop of milk ever since our Prophet Yūnus disappeared from us.” Hadrat Yūnus said: “Bring one goat to me.” He brought it to him, he passed his hands over its udders, and – by the permission of

Allāh *taʿālā* – it filled with milk. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* milked the goat. The goatherd was astonished and said: "If Hadrat Yūnus is alive, then it has to be you." He said: "I am certainly him." The goatherd fell to his feet and began kissing him. Hadrat Yūnus said to him: "Go into the city and inform the people that you saw me." He said: "Hadrat, they will not believe me." Hadrat Yūnus said: "Take these goats with you, they will affirm what you say." The goatherd left with his goats, and when he reached the city centre, he announced in a loud voice: "O people! Rejoice because our Prophet Yūnus has returned. I have just seen him." The people did not believe him. He said: "I am speaking the truth. These goats are my witnesses." The goats – acting under the order of Allāh *taʿālā* – testified to what he said. The people were surprised. The news reached the king. He got off immediately from his throne, all the people of the city accompanied him, they went out and saw Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* approaching.

Hadrat Yūnus cried profusely when he saw them. The people took him into the city. The king seated him on his throne and stood respectfully next to him. The people of the city were overjoyed. Hadrat Yūnus *ʿalayhis salām* lived among them for some time. He continued enjoining good and forbidding evil. When the king died, he called for the son of the goatherd and appointed him as the king.[1]

The subject matter which is contained in this story is not found in the Qur'ān. The punishment arrived and stopped. It had come because of their polytheism and unbelief. The people were convinced that it came

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[1] هكذا في أخبار الدول وآثار الأول.

because of their polytheism and unbelief, so they became monotheists and believers. Allāh's punishment does not befall believers and monotheists. The other point which is mentioned is the people's sincerity and repentance. It was a pure and perfect repentance. It was accepted because of their sincerity. This entire story is filled with the theme of sincerity. There is a need to ponder over it. That is all.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to relate this terrifying story with a special feeling and emotion in his general assemblies. The people would be reduced to tears. Towards the end of his life, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to emphasise the repetition of:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ صلى إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ

There is no deity but You. You are pure of all deficiency. I was of the sinners.[1]

[1] Sūrah al-Ambiyā', 21: 87.

THE ADMONITORY STORY OF <u>H</u>A<u>D</u>RAT HŪD

Allāh *taʿālā* relates the stories of several Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in the Qur'ān. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Nū<u>h</u> *ʿalayhis salām* and his people are mentioned as follows:

وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِ

We sent Nū<u>h</u> to his people..

Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about the <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* and his people as follows:

وَإِلٰى عَادٍ أَخَاهُمْ هُوْدًا ط قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ط أَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ.

To the people of ʿĀd, We sent their brother, Hūd. He said: "O my people! Worship Allāh. You have no deity other than Him. Do you not fear?"[1]

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* is referred to as "their brother" because he was from that nation. A person of the same community is sent so that it becomes easy for people to follow him. He said to them: "O my people! Worship Allāh, you have no deity other than Him."

يٰقَوْمِ لَا اَسْئَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ط اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِيْ فَطَرَنِيْ ط اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 65.

O people! I do not ask you for any wage for this [message]. My wage is only on Him who created me. Will you not, then, understand?"[1]

O my people, from among the proofs of my prophet-hood one additional proof is that I do not ask you for any recompense for conveying this message to you. My compensation is only with Allāh *taʿālā* who brought me from non-existence into existence. Will you still not understand? When a proof is present and I am pure from the obstacle of personal motives, what doubt can there be about my prophet-hood?

Absence of personal motives is essential for advice to be beneficial

It is mentioned in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* that every Prophet said this to his respective nation. In other words, each Prophet did not ask for any wage or remuneration for conveying Allāh's message. This was so that the evil thoughts which the people could have had about the Messenger is removed, and it was considered to be a pure and unadulterated advice. When a piece of advice is given for personal or other motives, it has no effect. Another point which is learnt from this statement of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* is that they are saying to their people: We are not in need of you even for our livelihood and day to day living. The Allāh who brought us from non-existence into existence is also the guarantor of our sustenance just as He provides sustenance to the animals and birds.

If this has been the way of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, it becomes a Sunnat for the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh who come after them – they must say to

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 51.

their people: "We do not ask you for a wage for conveying Allāh's message to you." They must do this so that the people become aware that their advising and admonishing them is not for personal or material benefits. This is a clear-cut issue.

وَيٰقَوْمِ اسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوْبُوْآ اِلَيْهِ يُرْسِلِ السَّمَآءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّدْرَارًا وَّيَزِدْكُمْ قُوَّةً اِلٰى قُوَّتِكُمْ وَلَا تَتَوَلَّوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ.

O people! Ask your Lord to forgive you your sins, then turn towards Him. He will send torrents of rain upon you from the sky, and add strength to your strength. Do not turn away as sinners.[1]

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said to his people: O my people! Ask Allāh *taʿālā* to pardon you your sins. In other words, embrace īmān and then remain devoted to Him in worship. Through the blessing of īmān and good deeds, He will send torrents of rain upon you. He will add to your present strength by giving you more strength. Thus, embrace īmān and do not turn away as criminals.

It is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* that the words "and add strength to your strength" mean: the first strength refers to the strength of īmān. The second strength refers to physical strength. In other words, He will give strength to your īmān and strengthen your bodies as well. Moreover, he will strengthen you as a nation. He will confer you with honour upon honour. This is similar to what Allāh *taʿālā* says elsewhere:

يُمْدِدْكُمْ بِاَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 52.

Allāh taʿālā will help you through wealth and children.

Hadrat Dahhāk says that the word "strength" in this context refers to prosperity. Hadrat ʿIkramah *rahimahullāh* says that it refers to increase in one's progeny – children and grandchildren. According to one explanation it refers to physical strength. Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* mentioned rain and strength because they were a people who owned farms, orchards and buildings. Rain and physical strength are obviously needed to do these things. According to some narrations they did not receive rains for three years and their women were not falling pregnant. Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* promised them that if they repent and seek forgiveness, they will receive rains, and their offspring will increase, resulting in an increase in their strength.

قَالُوْا يَا هُوْدُ مَا جِئْتَنَا بِبَيِّنَةٍ

They said: O Hūd! You have not brought to us any evidence.[1]

We are not going to give up our gods just by your telling us. We cannot believe you.

Rūh al-Maʿānī explains it thus: "You did not produce any clear evidence to prove the authenticity of your claims." They said this out of extreme obstinacy and severe turning away from the truth. The reason for saying this is that they did not really ponder over the verse because they could not even identify a verse as a verse or a sign as a sign. After all, Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* and the other Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came with clear signs and glaring miracles,

[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 53.

even though we may not know specifically what some of them were.

A Hadīth states that every Prophet was given such a number of signs and miracles which were enough for people to embrace īmān.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the people of Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* also went beyond the limits in rejecting the message and call of Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām*. Firstly they rejected his prophet-hood by saying: "We are not going to give up our gods just by your telling us." They did not stop there. They said something which conveys the meaning of their previous statement:

وَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

And we are not going to be believers in you.[1]

The grammatical construction of this sentence conveys the message that Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* must have no hope whatsoever of their embracing īmān.

They then claimed that Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* is a madman and that their gods have cast a spell on him. They said:

اِنْ نَّقُوْلُ اِلَّا اعْتَرٰكَ بَعْضُ اٰلِهَتِنَا بِسُوْءٍ

All we say is that some of our gods have seized you with an evil spirit in a terrible way.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 53.

[2] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 54.

In other words, since you are speaking ill of our gods and do not worship them, and you do not accept them to be worthy of worship, some of them caused your brains to be corrupted. To put it in another way: Because you were so audaciously against them, they turned you into a madman. This is why you are making foolish and idiotic statements such as: Allāh is one and you are His Messenger.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* was most angered by their response. And why should he not be angered!? He was a Prophet of Allāh *taʿālā*, how could their idols have any effect on him!? Those ignoramuses even said that their idols turned him into a lunatic. This obviously ignited his self-respect.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: "You are claiming that your idols turned me into a lunatic. Well, listen! I am openly making Allāh my witness, and you too listen and be witness to what I am saying: I am totally aloof from whatever you ascribe as partners to Allāh *taʿālā*. (If your idols have any power) you and your idols can get together and do whatever you want to harm me. You must leave no stone unturned in this regard, and give me no respite whatsoever. We will see what you and they can do. If both you and your idols can do nothing to me, what can they alone do to me? I am making this open claim because those idols are completely and totally helpless. This is why I do not fear them in the least. As for you, although you have some power, I do not fear you also because:

اِنِّيْ تَوَكَّلْتُ عَلَى اللّٰهِ رَبِّيْ وَرَبِّكُمْ ؕ مَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اِلَّا هُوَ اٰخِذٌۢ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ.

I have placed my trust in Allāh, who is my Lord and your Lord. There is not a moving creature except that its

forelock is in the grasp of Allāh. Surely my Lord is on the straight path.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that he negated their harm as a substantiation. In other words, the reason for making this open challenge to you is that I have placed my trust in Allāh *taʿālā*, I rely on His promises, and I hold the belief that my and your true Master is Allāh *taʿālā*. You cannot do anything without His order. And you can cause me no harm unless He wills it. Therefore, even if you empty all your arrows from your quiver, and spend all your energies in trying to harm me, you will not be able to do anything without the order of Allāh *taʿālā*.

From this speech, a new miracle was displayed, viz. one person singly makes an inciting speech before such powerful and mighty people, but they still cannot do anything to him. His speech was also an answer to their claim when they said: "You haven't produced any miracle to prove your prophet-hood." Even if we disregard his previous miracles, this is another miracle. His claim to prophet-hood is therefore not without a proof.

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have full faith and conviction in Allāh *taʿālā*. Therefore, when they make statements of this nature, they receive the full support of Allāh *taʿālā*. They place their full reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*, so He sees to them. When Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* gave them an ultimatum, they did not have the courage to respond and humiliate themselves. In fact, Allāh *taʿālā* casts fear and dread in the hearts of the opposition in situations like these. This causes them to become totally awe-struck. They lose their senses

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 56.

and powers, their hands and feet become swollen, and their intellect is taken away from them. When a man is in such a situation, he obviously cannot think nor do anything. This is that divine help which the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and their true followers receive at the time when they are facing those who are on falsehood.

Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Surely my Lord is on the straight path." What this means is that because Allāh *taʿālā* is fully aware of the conditions of His servants and He alone rewards or punishes them for their actions, He will suffice the person who holds on to Him. Like a person sitting on a road – he is protecting the road and saving the passers-by from its harms.

In this last statement Hadrat Hūd *ʿalayhis salām* said "my Lord" while previously he said: "my Lord and your Lord". The reason for this is that previously the discussion concerned reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. In order to demonstrate His greatness, he said to them: I have placed my trust in such a Being who is my Lord and your Lord as well. I am obedient to Him while you are not. Thus, He will never allow those who rely on Him to be vanquished. He will most certainly help me. And since He protects His sincere servants only, he said: "my Lord is on the straight path". Our relationship with Him is stronger than yours. He is also your Lord in the sense that He is eligible for worship by you, but honour belongs to us only because we are the ones who are worshipping Him while you are not. This is why you are deprived of His mercy and kindness, while we are enjoying both.

Glory to Allāh! What knowledge and sciences! They are not only enlightening but inspiring. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand them Āmīn.

DIVINE TEACHINGS (1)

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the following verses in much detail. His explanation is most beneficial and admonitory. It is quoted in four parts.

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ج تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ج وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا.

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance. Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life. Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose case exceeds all bounds.[1]

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ ط مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَّمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.

Do not repulse those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure alone. You are in no way accountable for their reckoning nor are they in any

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

way accountable for your reckoning, which could cause you to repulse them and thus become of the unjust.[1]

The circumstances behind the revelation of these two verses according to different narrations of the exegetes is that some Quraysh leaders of Makkah came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They saw a few poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* such as Hadrat Bilāl *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Suhayb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Salmān *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, Hadrat Khabbāb *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* sitting around Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The Quraysh leaders looked at them with contempt and made some derogatory statements about them to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They added: "If you remove these people from your company, we will come to your assembly and discuss with you. We will also benefit from your words."

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not accede to their request. They then said: "Okay, you must ask them to leave for the duration of our meeting with you. When we leave, you may sit with them if you wish. The Arabs recognize our honour and high standing. You receive delegations from everywhere, and we will feel ashamed if those delegations see us sitting with these slaves and servants who are with you." They added: "We are disturbed and offended by the stink which emanates from them because of the woollen garments which they are wearing."

On seeing their persistence, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* also said: "O Rasūlullāh! Let's try what they are suggesting and we will see what they do." In other

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 52.

words, will they come onto the straight path or not. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Very well." The Quraysh leaders said: "You must write down a covenant in this regard." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* agreed to this as well, and asked for pen and paper. He then called for Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* to write the covenant.

This verse was then revealed:

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Do not repulse those who call upon their Lord morning and evening, seeking His pleasure alone.

In other words, their sole objective is Allāh's pleasure. They have no desire for wealth, authority and so on. They worship Allāh *taʿālā* solely for His pleasure. They have no other objective. This is known as true sincerity. What this means is that together with worship, they have the quality of sincerity.

The prisoners of war after the Battle of Badr

Quite often verses used to be revealed in support of the views of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. It was his view that the prisoners of war after the Battle of Badr should be killed. He was also of the view that the janāzah salāh of ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy ibn Salūl – the leader of the hypocrites – should not be performed. Subsequently verses in support of these views were revealed.

However, in the topic which we are discussing, his view was the opposite. On other occasions he was against the unbelievers but here he felt that their request should be acceded to. The order of Allāh *taʿālā* was not in line with his view.

After this verse was revealed, <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿUmar *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu* came to Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and apologized. Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the following verse:

وَإِذَا جَآءَكَ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ۙ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوْءًۢا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ ۙ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

When those who believe in Our verses come to you, say: Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed mercy upon Himself - that whoever among you does any evil out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and becomes virtuous, then He is forgiving, merciful.[1]

Furthermore, after these verses were revealed, Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called for those poor <u>S</u>a<u>h</u>ābah *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhum* and said:

سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلٰى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed mercy upon Himself.

Subsequently, it became the practice of Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remain seated with the <u>S</u>a<u>h</u>ābah *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhum*. When it was time for him to leave, he would get up and go while the <u>S</u>a<u>h</u>ābah *ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhum* would remain seated. The following verse was revealed:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 54.

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord.[1]

Subsequently, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would remain seated with the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. When it was time for him to leave, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* would leave first, and then Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would get up from his place.

Look at these teachings of Allāh *taʿālā*! Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* is ordering Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to take the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* into consideration. Also try and gauge how much importance Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gave to practising on these verses after they were revealed.

Now listen to the meaning of these verses:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance.

They desire nothing but Allāh's pleasure. They have no worldly objectives.

Allāh *taʿālā* mentions two qualities of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* here: (1) they invoke Allāh *taʿālā* morning and evening, (2) they seek His pleasure. Allāh *taʿālā* loved these two qualities of theirs so much that He could not tolerate their feelings getting hurt, and expressed His extreme displeasure at the scorn and derision with which the unbelievers of Makkah treated them. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproved of their attitude severely.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا

Let not your eyes overlook them, seeking the adornment of this worldly life.

In other words, do not think that if these leaders and wealthy people become Muslims it will bring beauty and glory to Islam, and that Islam will progress a lot. This is because Islam's beauty and glory does not lie in external material things. It is based on sincerity and total obedience, even if it is by poor people. Therefore, do not turn your eyes away from these poor S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* by directing your attention towards the worldly people. Do not look down on the poor Muslims on account of their dishevelled state and poverty. The beauty of Islam lies with them, they are a sincere and devoted group. They are the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*. They are the ones who enjoy close proximity in His court. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself approves of embracing and welcoming them.

Look at the level of the īmān of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* and the extent of sincerity in every action of theirs that Allāh *taʿālā* revealed verses in praise of their obedience and sincerity. The S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* must have been really overjoyed by this.

The Quraysh unbelievers were saying: "Remove these poor people from your company and we will attend your assemblies. We may even become your followers." This was a scheme which they had plotted. They thought that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* now has a group of followers who should be removed on this pretext. There was no sense in what they were suggesting because how can any sensible person remove a group of sincere and devoted people solely on the assumption that those who are his enemies will

become attracted to him!? Furthermore, we do not even know whether these enemies will become friends or not. Since Allāh *taʿālā* was fully aware of their plot, He said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا.

Pay no heed to the one whose heart We have rendered heedless of Our remembrance, who follows his own lusts and whose case exceeds all bounds.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes beneath this verse:

وفيه تنبيه على أن الباعث لهم إلى استدعاء الطرد غفلة قلوبهم عن جناب الله تعالى شأنه وملاحظة المعقولات وانهماكهم في الحسيات حتى خفي عليهم ان الشرف بحلية النفس لا بزينة الجسد.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the thing which prompted them to ask for the removal of the poor Sahābah radiyallāhu ʿanhum was the heedlessness of their hearts towards Allāh taʿālā, inattention towards rationalities, and engrossment with the external to the extent that it remained concealed to them that honour and greatness are acquired through embellishing the inner self and not by beautifying the external body.

Look at what a beautiful point ʿAllāmah Ālūsī *rahimahullāh* made! First of all they were heedless of Allāh *taʿālā*. To make matters worse they were totally heedless of rationalities. Had they pondered over them they would have realized that when a person receives honour and dignity, it is because of the excellence and virtue which is within him; not because of his external

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

appearance and beauty. No intelligent person can ever accept external appearance to be the basis for honour.

The negligence of these unbelievers in using their common sense was that they hoped and wanted the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to be removed because of their own wealth and authority. This was based on extreme foolishness and stupidity because they did not have this much sense to realize that if the truthfulness and genuineness of some people has been established with certainty and through experience, how can they be removed in favour of those whose friendship is assumed and imaginary? Could it ever be expected of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove his loyal Companions who had borne every type of hardship and misery for his sake and who remained firm with him?

The fact of the matter is that the Quraysh leaders were unbelievers, and were heedless of Allāh *taʿālā* because of the darkness of unbelief. This is why they said things against Allāh *taʿālā*. Furthermore, kufr brings such bad luck that it takes away a person's sound thinking. Consequently, he can only understand things which are irrational.

The difference between prophet-hood and sultanate

This is why Allāh *taʿālā* openly rejected the request of the Quraysh leaders and refuted the view of the wealthy and affluent people. Had this not been done, they would have even made prophet-hood a point of discussion and debate. Divine revelation is coming to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, injunctions are being sent to him and these people want to make all this a point of debate and consultation! They want to express their views against divine revelation!?

This is, after all, the difference between prophet-hood and sultanate. In a sultanate the king has many helpers and advisors who advise him. The sultanate runs by relying on their advice. They can change the sultanate whenever they like and cause the government to topple. But this is not the case with prophet-hood. A Prophet enjoys the divine help of Allāh *taʿālā*. Since Allāh *taʿālā* is the one who appoints him to this position, He takes it upon Himself to help and support him. In the beginning, a Prophet commences his call towards Allāh *taʿālā* by himself. Gradually he develops a following. The numbers increase to the extent that a powerful group of truth-lovers join him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also started inviting the Arabs to Islam all by himself. People began embracing Islam gradually until a powerful group of Sahābah was formed. Islam acquired strength and power in this way. How could Allāh *taʿālā* ever tolerate the removal of this group for the sake of a few Quraysh leaders!? Allāh *taʿālā* showed special consideration for His sincere and devoted servants and clearly announced that the group of poor Companions can never be removed from the company of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If you [unbelievers] want, you may join the assembly and embrace Islam; or leave.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ قف فَمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَآءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ

Say: The truth is from your Lord. Then whoever wills, let him believe; and whoever wills, let him disbelieve.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 29.

In other words, it is not going to benefit or harm Us in any way. Rather, you will be harming yourself if you do not embrace īmān. And it will be to your advantage if you embrace īmān. But if you are going to remain unbelievers, then listen to the punishment for it:

إِنَّآ اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا ۙ أَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ؕ وَإِنْ يَّسْتَغِيْثُوْا يُغَاثُوْا بِمَآءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوْهَ ؕ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ؕ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

We have prepared for the sinners a fire, the awnings of which will encompass them. If they ask for help, they will be given water like pus which would scald the faces. What a dreadful drink and what an evil resting place![1]

To this point, the discussion was around Hell and the people of Hell. The people of Paradise are described as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا. أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ ؕ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ؕ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

Surely those who believed and did good deeds – We do not waste the recompense of he who did good. For such are gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green clothes of fine and coarse silk, reclining

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 29.

therein on couches. What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place![1]

Glory to Allāh! Allāh *taʿālā* captured for us an entire scene of Paradise and Hell, and displayed to us the conditions of the poor and rich, the good fortune of the poor Muslims and the wretchedness of the wealthy unbelievers. Allāh *taʿālā* illustrated Paradise and Hell separately, and described the residents of Paradise and the inmates of Hell. The clothing of the people of Paradise is specifically described because the rich unbelievers had said that a stink is emanating from the clothing of the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* disapproved of this and therefore said that they are His beloveds and His friends. Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: "First of all, the stink which emanates from their clothes is not disliked by Me. Secondly, no matter in what condition they live in this world, they consider everything apart from Allāh's pleasure to be insignificant. Their original place of residence is the Hereafter where every type of comfort has been prepared for them. They will have palatial homes, exotic foods and expensive garments.

نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ؕ وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place!

Honouring the poor and needy

Glory to Allāh! Look at the lofty levels to which Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed the poor and needy. Look at the honour which He conferred to them – He brought them to His court and seated them on thrones, while

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 30-31.

the wealthy unbelievers were dropped to the pits. When these verses were revealed, the mighty unbelievers fell down in shame while the poor believers advanced and progressed.

No one can describe a thing in a manner done by Allāh *taʿālā*. In the Qur'ān Allāh *taʿālā* admonishes in a way which, if a person were to ponder over just one verse, his īmān will be refreshed and reinvigorated. I take an oath and say that there is nothing like the Qur'ān to impress the hearts of people. If the hearts can be instilled with life, then it is solely through the Qur'ān. If the spirit can be blown into them, then it is from the Qur'ān alone. If just one rukūʿ, in fact, just one verse settles in the heart, a person can realize his objective. Just read the Qur'ān and see if your īmān develops or not. Provided you read with sincerity and for Allāh's pleasure – neither for wealth nor for name and fame. When we see people not benefiting from the Qur'ān, then it is because they are reading it for worldly motives. Students are engaging in dhikr, Qur'ān recitation and everything else. They are striving hard – but all this is for worldly motives. Look at the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum*. Allāh *taʿālā* says about them:

يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

They desire His countenance [His pleasure].

It is most sad that the Dīn is used to acquire of the world. If this is what you really want to do, why don't you get into trade and agriculture? People's beliefs have become corrupted; they do not value anything.

H̲ad̲rat Abū Bakr *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

من أوتي القرآن فرأى أن أحدا أوتي من الدنيا أفضل مما أوتي، فقد صغر عظيما وعظم صغيرا.

If a person is blessed with the Qur'ān and he thinks that someone has been given something better of this world than him, then he has belittled a great thing, and considered a small thing to be great.

Comparison between the Sahābah and us

Now let us compare our conditions with those of the Sahābah's. Look at how much difference there is between the two. The level of the Sahābah's obedience, sincerity and seeking of Allāh's pleasure was such that Allāh *taʿālā* is saying to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he must confine himself to sitting in the company of those who engage in the worship of their Lord solely for His pleasure, and he must not turn his attention away from them.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

عن سلمنا أنها لما نزلت قام رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يلتمسهم حتى أصابهم في موخر المسجد يذكرون الله تعالى، فقال الحمد لله الذي لم يمتني حتى أمرني أن أصبر نفسي مع رجال من أمتي معكم الحيوة الممات.

Hadrat Salmān radiyallāhu ʿanhu says that when this verse was revealed, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam went out in search of the poor Sahābah. He found them in the rear of the masjid engaging in the remembrance of Allāh taʿālā. On seeing this, he said: All praise is due to Allāh who did not cause me to die before ordering me to keep myself with those poor

people of my ummat. O people! My living and my dying is with you.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the greatness of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He is teaching a lesson to the ummat until the day of Resurrection. Look at the affection which Allāh *taʿālā* showed for the poor Sahābah and how He strengthened them! Also look at how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* practised on these teachings and instructions. Observe the consideration which he showed to them. No one else could have done this. There were instances when even Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was reprimanded against the poor Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following Hadīth in *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

عن عائذ بن عمرو المزني وهو من أهل بيعة الرضوان رضي الله عنه أن أبا سفيان أتى على سلمان وصهيب وبلال في نفر، فقالوا ما أخذت سيوف الله من عدو الله مآخذها، فقال أبو بكر رضي الله عنه أتقولون هذا لشيخ قريش وسيدهم، وأتى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فأخبره، فقال يا أبا بكر لعلك أغضبتهم، لإن كنت أغضبتهم لقد أغضبت ربك، فأتاهم فقال يا إخوتاه، أغضبتكم، قالوا لا، يغفر الله لك يا أخي. (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat ʿĀ'idh ibn ʿAmr al-Muzanī radiyallāhu ʿanhu who was one of the participants in the Bayʿah ar-Ridwān relates that Abū Sufyān [who was not a Muslim at the time] and a group of his friends passed by Salmān, Suhayb and Bilāl radiyallāhu ʿanhum. These three Sahābah said [to Abū Sufyān]: "The swords of Allāh are yet to take their full due from the

enemy [Abū Sufyān] of Allāh." Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu said to them: "How can you say such a thing to a senior and leader of the Quraysh?" He then went to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and related the incident to him. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "O Abū Bakr! You probably angered them [the three Sahābah]. If you angered them, then you have angered Allāh taʿālā." Hadrat Abū Bakr radiyallāhu ʿanhu went to the three and said: "O brothers! I probably angered you." They replied: "No. May Allāh forgive you, brother."

The status of poor Sahābah

Think of the high status which Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* enjoyed and how intensely Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved him. But when he demonstrated the slightest unpleasantness towards the poor Sahābah, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to him: "O Abū Bakr! If you made them angry then you have made Allāh *taʿālā* angry." What a serious warning!

This was the rank and status of these poor Sahābah in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Allāh *taʿālā* has no value whatsoever for wealth, authority and power. After all, these are things which are given by Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. He can take them away whenever He wills. Why, then, should Allāh consider a person to be great if he owns these things. A person becomes beloved and accepted in Allāh's court through obedience to Him. But the unbelievers did not understand even this much. They used to go to the assemblies of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and make such demands – that he must remove the poor Sahābah completely, or at least ask them to leave when they arrive.

DIVINE TEACHINGS (2)

I am speaking on the following verse:

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهُ

Keep yourself with those who invoke their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance.[1]

In his *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* explains the correlation of this verse with those before it. He says: Before this, the discussion was on messenger-ship. Further on, the rights and etiquette which have to be observed with respect to the position of messenger-ship are outlined. The essence is that the duty of propagation must continue independently, and the believers (despite their poverty) must be given preference over the unbelievers (notwithstanding their affluence and prosperity). The circumstances behind the revelation of these verses is also the same. That is, a few polytheist leaders asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove the poor Sahābah when they arrive. Details in this regard were given previously.

We learn from this that just as Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was conferred with the mantle of messenger-ship, specific verses were revealed with reference to how he should uphold this position. This verse is among those verses. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* adhered to those duties and etiquette to the full, and left a perfect example whose

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 28.

parallel cannot be found until the day of Resurrection. He taught the same to the ummat. Thus, it will be necessary and essential for any person who is on the pedestal of propagation to adhere to these rules and etiquette. It will be necessary for him to follow the Sunnat in this regard as well. After all, he is not independent in this position. Rather, he is a deputy of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is why it is essential for him to follow the Sunnat in every matter. Whatever rank and acceptance he enjoys in Allāh's court will be based on this obedience and emulation.

A word of warning to the mashā'ikh

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Masā'il as-Sulūk*:

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ

Let not your eyes overlook them.

This is an order to the mashā'ikh to remain focused on the seekers and not to get fed up with them.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the Tābiʿīn and the true heirs who came after them understood this teaching fully and practised accordingly. They presented practical examples of this Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The poor people used to take the place of the wealthy ones in the assemblies of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*. What this means is that it is the norm to have the wealthy and influential people to be seated near and in special places. But Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* used to do the opposite. The poor people used to sit closest to him. He used to allocate special

seats for them, and would not bother about the wealthy ones.

It is related that when the wealthy people used to come to the assembly of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*, they used to express the desire in their hearts that if only they were also poor so that they could sit close to him.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the sentiments of the wealthy people of those days. They did not feel offended. Instead, they gave preference to Dīn over this world. This is proof of their sincerity and genuine quest. If this was the condition of the people who used to attend the assemblies of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*, what can be said about him!? How much of sincerity and devotion he must have had! To what extent he must have been following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*! Just look at this one point – that he gave preference to the poor people over the wealthy ones. This is no ordinary matter. Every person is not in a position to do this. Only he can do it who has a very strong urge to follow the Sunnat and gives full attention to it. Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* understood that Allāh *taʿālā* wants due attention to be paid to the poor people. This is why He revealed verses in this regard and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* practised on them and showed the way to the ummat. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would not get up from his assembly until the poor people got up themselves and left. How, then, can a follower of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* disregard this teaching and pay not attention to the poor? Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* fully understood the Qur'ān and

Sunnat, and how he practised on them! May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to do the same. Āmīn.

An admonitory incident

Anyway, that was a great imām [Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh*]. Now listen to the story of a recent ʿālim. A person who belonged to a minor tribe came to him and invited him to a function which they were hosting. The ʿālim accepted the invitation. Incidentally, a western educated person was sitting near the ʿālim. He said: "Maulānā! You people accept the invitation of even lowly people!?" The ʿālim said to the man who invited him: "Listen brother, this is what this person is saying, so I now excuse myself from accepting your invitation." The man and his family had a lot of faith and confidence in the ʿālim, so he was quite disturbed by his refusal, and said: "As long as you do not join, we cannot go forward with the wedding." When he persisted, he said: "Brother, there is one way out. Invite this man and speak to him in a very humble manner so that he accepts the invitation. If he comes, I will also come and join in the function." The family people went to the man and extended an invitation to him. They insisted and said to him: "You will have to come because Hadrat Maulānā has accepted on the condition that you join him. And if Hadrat Maulānā does not come, we will not enjoy our food at all."

When these people persisted in this way, others who were observing the scene and saw their sincerity, they said to the man: "Brother, you appear to be very proud. These poor people are displaying so much of affection towards you and begging you, but your heart is not relenting and you are not accepting their invitation." Eventually he had to accept the invitation. The ʿālim also agreed and the two went together. When

they approached, all the people stood up and received the two with genuine warmth. As the people were going to embrace the ʿālim, the one who had extended the invitation said to the people: "You must embrace this man as well because he is Hadrat Maulānā's companion." In this way, all those who embraced Hadrat Maulānā embraced this man as well. In short, there was all round respect and honour shown to the two. Excellent arrangements for the meal were made. When the man saw all this, he was highly impressed and said: "Maulānā, today I have seen real respect and honour. This is what you call respect and honour."

Fundamental honour lies in following the Sunnat

I related this story to you to show you how much this ʿālim followed the Sunnat. He accepted the invitation of poor people and showed concern for their feelings. Had he refused, it would have broken their hearts.

The point is that if everyone accepts the invitation of wealthy people only, where will the poor people go to? This is why that ʿālim accepted the invitation of those poor people and did not bother about what worldly people say. After all, fundamental honour lies in following the Sunnat and in searching for ways to acquire Allāh's pleasure. Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* are pleased when concern is shown for the poor. Why, then, should we not be considerate of them?

Furthermore, poor people are by and large humble. They express their love and affection. They don't have too many formalities. They are simple people. This is why there is enjoyment in their food and the heart experiences joy in their company. On the other hand,

the rich have many formalities. They do not have the sincerity and love like the poor people. How, then, can you experience real enjoyment in their food? The fundamental things are love and a bond. If these are not found, there is nothing.

This is why that ʿālim did not reply to the objection made by his western educated friend. Instead, he refused the invitation. He knew that the people who extended the invitation to him were so sincere that they will not take no for an answer. This is why he adopted a plan which compelled his friend to join him. His friend had to witness everything and then acknowledge that true honour was what he experienced on that day. His thinking was rectified in this way.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the manner in which he was rectified! If he was made to understand the situation verbally, he would not have understood it even with a thousand explanations. But when he followed the ʿālim, he understood it fully. There are many incidents of this nature. This one was related to you to serve as an example.

Now listen to the discussion on the previously-quoted verse. After the verse which we explained to you, Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of two people so that it may serve as a consolation for the believers and a refutation of the baseless claims of the unbelievers. In this way, the believers must not be saddened by their poverty. Instead, they must be grateful for the treasures of the Hereafter which they are accruing. At the same time, the unbelievers must not scorn and look down on the poor on the basis of their pride and haughtiness.

Ḫaḏrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *raḫimahullāh* links this story with the verses before it by saying:

While explaining the etiquette of propagation, Allāh *taʿālā* refuted the request of the unbelievers who wanted the poor Muslims to be removed when they came into the assembly of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In order to demonstrate the despicability of wealth and the superiority of īmān and good deeds, a story is related to show that the basis for this request [of removing the poor Muslims] was pride over worldly riches, and scorn and contempt for poor Muslims. This story destroys this attitude of the unbelievers.

While this story refutes the unbelievers on one hand, it is a source of consolation and comfort for the believers – they must not be grieved by poverty and they must be grateful when they acquire riches. Now listen to this story. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا. كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا. وَّكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ.

Set forth for them the parable of two men: We made for one of them two orchards of vines, and surrounded them with date-palms, and placed between them a cornfield. Each of the two orchards yields its produce and does not decrease anything from it. And We caused a river to flow between the two [orchards]. He received the fruit.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32-34.

فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا. وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ج قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهِ أَبَدًا. وَّمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً لا وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا.

So he said to his friend when he was conversing with him: "I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect." He entered his orchard having wronged himself. He said: "I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed. And I do not think that the Resurrection will take place. If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there."[1]

In other words, you are always speaking about the orchards of the Hereafter and saying that they are better than the orchards of this world. And that they are for the accepted servants. The proof of my acceptance is that look at the comfort, luxuries and honour which I am experiencing here. If the Resurrection takes place, then too I will receive Paradise there.

On hearing all this, his friend who was a religious and poor man, said:

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰكَ رَجُلًا. لٰكِنَّاْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لا لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ج إِنْ تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا

[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 34-36.

وَّوَلَدًا. فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْ أَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا. أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا.

His friend said to him while conversing with him: "Do you reject the One who created you from soil, then from a drop of sperm, then fashioned you into a man? I still maintain that He is Allāh, my Lord and I associate no one with my Lord. When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh. If you see me less than you in wealth and offspring, it may well be that my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours and send upon your orchard a whirlwind from the sky reducing it to a barren field the next morning. Or that its water dries up the next morning and you are unable to seek it."[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

DIVINE TEACHINGS (3)

His friend advises him and says: When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh." Allāh *taʿālā* will keep the orchard to exist for as long as He wills., and He can destroy it whenever He wills. All means are useless in the face of His will. None of the means can come to your assistance if He does not will it. If you see me less than you in wealth and children (and therefore have the misgiving that you and your ways are not disapproved by Allāh *taʿālā*), then I see the time approaching when my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours (either in this world or after I die, which will have every type of comfort and luxury). On the other hand, He will send a disaster from above on your orchard which will reduce it to a barren field. Or, he will cause the water which is flowing from a river to your land to go deep into the bowels of the earth and you will not be able to draw it out no matter what efforts you make.

The believer did not make any reference to the unbeliever's children. The simple explanation which comes to my mind for not mentioning them is that the comfort of children is coupled with that of wealth. When a person has no wealth, the children become a cause of torment and punishment.

In essence, the reason behind your misgiving is your wealth which you have and which I do not have. It is totally wrong for you to think in this way because – first of all – it is highly possible for the opposite to happen. Secondly, it is bound to perish at some time or the other. On the other hand, the bounties of the

Hereafter are everlasting. Consideration is therefore given to the Hereafter and not this world.

After this conversation, the thing which the believer predicted actually happened. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَأُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا. هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا.

All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord." He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh nor could he take revenge himself. It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.[1]

What calamity descended on his orchard is not mentioned. However, the passive "was encompassed" suggests that it was a most destructive calamity.

Tafsīr Khāzin states that it was a fire which descended from the skies, burnt the orchard and farm, and caused the water to dry up. Ibn H̲ibbān also mentions a fire (as related by Ibn Abī Shaybah and Ibn Abī H̲ātim on the authority of ad̲-D̲ah̲h̲āk).

Subsequently, he began wringing his hands over whatever he had spent on his orchard. It was now

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 42-44.

fallen on its trellises. The orchard is mentioned specifically because he had spent most of his money on it, and it was also the most beloved of his wealth. His remorse over its destruction is not mentioned because it is obvious. The money which he spent on it is mentioned because it was a cause of double remorse – over the present and the past, directly and indirectly. He began saying: “How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord.” This includes rejection of the Hereafter. Rejection of tauẖīd is mentioned because it is the greatest.

What we can gauge from this is that he realized that the calamity descended because of his kufr. He expressed his remorse that if he did not commit kufr, the calamity would not have come to him. And if it came, he would have received a recompense for it in the Hereafter. But now he has lost both in this world and in the Hereafter.

The believer must have learnt of all these things which he said and thought. It does not necessarily mean that he too became a believer because his remorse was over the loss which he suffered and not over the reprehensibility of kufr.

Allāh *taʿālā* says thereafter:

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا

He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh in preventing the calamity from coming down or repulsing it after it came down. All the pride which he previously had about his group and followers disappeared. At the same time, he could not exact any revenge from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* concludes by saying:

هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا

It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.

In other words, it is at this point that it is only Allāh *taʿālā* who can help, and (in the Hereafter), His reward is the best. Even in this world, His result is the best. That is, if His close servants experience any loss in this world, they receive a good recompense for it in both worlds. On the other hand, an unbeliever is in total and absolute loss.

This story demonstrates the fleeting and despicable nature of worldly goods and possessions, and the eternal and honourable nature of good deeds. This story must have really consoled the Muslims and brought tranquillity to them. If so much of consideration is shown to the poor Muslims in this world and they are accorded so much of respect, what can be said of the gifts which they will receive in the Hereafter – the place which is especially reserved for Allāh's righteous and pious servants! Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows what bounties they will receive there. We can get the slightest hint of those bounties by studying the Ahādīth.

A believer must never be grieved by worldly poverty in this fleeting and temporary world. He must concentrate on acquiring the wealth and treasures of the Hereafter.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent piece of advice from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which out to be imprinted on our hearts. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise and may He confer us with the bounties of the Hereafter. Āmīn. (compiler)

DIVINE TEACHINGS (4)

اَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيْمِ. بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ.

عَبَسَ وَتَوَلّٰى. أَنْ جَاءَهُ الْأَعْمٰى. وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّهُ يَزَّكّٰى. أَوْ يَذَّكَّرُ فَتَنْفَعَهُ الذِّكْرٰى. أَمَّا مَنِ اسْتَغْنٰى. فَأَنْتَ لَهُ تَصَدّٰى. وَمَا عَلَيْكَ أَلَّا يَزَّكّٰى. وَأَمَّا مَنْ جَاءَكَ يَسْعٰى. وَهُوَ يَخْشٰى. فَأَنْتَ عَنْهُ تَلَهّٰى. كَلَّا إِنَّهَا تَذْكِرَةٌ. فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكَرَهُ.

He frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man. What do you know? Perhaps he will purify himself. Or he may have pondered and the pondering may have benefited him. As for he who could not bother, you are concerned about him. You are not to be blamed in any way if he does not reform. As for he who came running towards you, and he fears, you pay no attention to him. It should not be so. This is an admonition. Whoso wills, should read it.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was sitting in Masjid-e-Harām when a few Quraysh leaders and nobles (such as ʿUtbah, Rabīʿah, Shaybah, Abu Jahal and others) were present with him. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was explaining to them the beauty of Islam and the harms of idol-worship. He was fully focussed in his address to them when a

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[1] Sūrah ʿAbasa, 80: 1-12.

blind S̱aḏ̱ābī by the name of ʿAbdullāh ibn Shurayḫ *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* who was also known as Ibn Umm Maktūm came to Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not too pleased by his arrival because he felt that since he was a blind person, he might say things which would interrupt him and his conversation with the Quraysh leaders will be disrupted. Consequently, the task of inviting them to Islam will remain incomplete. The blind S̱aḫābī entered the assembly, sat down behind Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "Teach me such and such sūrah of the Qur'ān, and show some attention to me because I bore many difficulties in inquiring about your whereabouts and eventually came here."

Out of consideration for the Quraysh leaders, Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* remained silent and then asked the blind man to wait a bit. After a little while, he made his request again and expressed his hurry. His inappropriate actions caused the Quraysh leaders to be offended and disturbed. The effects of displeasure were visible on the face of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he turned his face away from the blind man, and turned his attention towards the Quraysh leaders. This sūrah was then sent down wherein a severe reprimand about this treatment was revealed.

Allāh *taʿālā* sends the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* for the guidance and rectitude of people. This is why He directly undertakes their training and education. In this way, they can imbibe the character of Allāh *taʿālā* and be embellished with the highest level of characteristics and mannerisms. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

أدّبني ربّي فأحسن تأديبي، وعلّمني ربّي فاحسن تعليمي[1]

My Lord taught me manners, this is why my manners became the best. My Lord taught me, this is why my education is the best.

In this sūrah, Allāh *taʿālā* teaches and trains Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a very special and lofty manner. From the circumstances behind the revelation of this sūrah we learn that Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was explaining the beauty of Islam and the reprehensibility of idol-worship to the Quraysh leaders. He was doing this with full focus and attention. It was obviously a most important matter. The blind S̱aẖābī became an obstacle to it and began distracting Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* repeatedly, and was expressing his hurry. The effects of displeasure became apparent on the face of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he turned his face away from him. Allāh *taʿālā* was not pleased by this so He revealed this sūrah.

H̱aḏrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh* says that the commentators faced a serious objection over this reprimand because Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not break any rules of the Sharīʿat. Why, then, was he reprimanded so severely? The rule of the Sharīʿat is that general benefit takes precedence over specific benefit. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gave preference to addressing the Quraysh leaders over teaching a sūrah to the blind S̱aẖābī because if the Quraysh leaders embraced Islam, it was highly expected for the rest of the people of Makkah to

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[1] فيض القدير، حديث ٣١٠.

embrace it. After all, people generally follow the religion of their rulers. On the other hand, teaching this one blind person would have benefited him alone.

Furthermore, inviting towards Islam is given preference over teaching the Qur'ān because inviting is the fundamental, while teaching is a branch of it. The jurists have laid down the rule that if a person comes and says: "Teach me Islam and make me a Muslim", and another person comes and says: "Teach me the Qur'ān" or he asks for some advice, then teaching Islam has to be given precedence. This is because delaying the teaching of Islam is more harmful than delaying the other things [such as teaching the Qur'ān]. The spiritual condition of a kāfir on account of the spiritual ailment of kufr which is within him is similar to a person who has been bitten by a venomous snake. The slightest inattention or delay in his treatment will result in a failure in his treatment [and he will die]. On the other hand, the condition of a person who is ignorant of the rules of the Sharī'at or cannot read the Qur'ān is like a person who has an ailment which is not dangerous at all. It can be treated easily and slowly.

Rasūlullāh's blessed facial expression changed on account of the inappropriate questions of the blind Sahābī. There are two reasons why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is not eligible for reprimand in this regard. (1) It is a natural change in facial expression which is beyond one's control. If a person were to be taken to task for such things, it would entail imposing something which is beyond his power. (2) If a person frowns at a blind person, turns his attention away from him, does not pay attention to him – then all these things are the same to him

because he cannot see. He can therefore not be harmed or offended by them.

Furthermore, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was not aware that his action was disliked by Allāh *taʿālā* because no prohibition in this regard was revealed as yet. How, then, can he be reprimanded so severely right at the beginning?

The answer to the above objection is as follows:

A poet says:

> Do not gauge the actions of the pure ones against your own because although the words *sher* and *sher* appear to be exactly the same, the meaning of each one is different.

The first one means "a lion" and the second means "milk". There is a major difference between the two. This is an excellent answer which leaves no room for objection.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says further on that although the blind person could not see the changes in facial expression, others could see those changes. They would have regarded it as partiality towards the wealthy and disregard for the poor. Allāh *taʿālā* disliked this possible allegation against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* wanted the internal and external selves of His beloved [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] to be devoted to Allāh's pleasure and devotion to Him. There must be no assertion whatsoever of the slightest ostentation against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Consideration to the capability of the seeker

Furthermore, pure souls must take into consideration the capabilities of the seekers when teaching and guiding them, and they must focus on the end result. There were many humble fakirs who became guiding lamps for entire countries and continents by virtue of their lofty capabilities. The expectation of general benefit must be based on the capability of the seeker. Looking at the large numbers of wealthy people at present and being deceived by this is the work of short-sighted people. It is the work of those who do not have any knowledge of the different ranks of the souls and their capabilities. The blind person benefiting from the company of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was certain and definitive, while the wealthy leaders benefiting from the call of Islam and from them the residents of the city benefiting from it was a matter which is supposed. It is not good to give precedence to something which is supposed over something which is definitive and certain.

The fact of the matter is that although there can be no possibility whatsoever of the action of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* being unlawful and a sin, Allāh *taʿālā* does not suffice with merely saving His beloveds from sin. Rather, He wants them to imbibe His characteristics. Like an affectionate father who, when he sees his sons adopting the appearance and ways which are different from his, he will reprimand them even if the appearance and ways which they adopt are lawful and correct. A king will not approve of his sons earning a living by becoming ordinary labourers and soldiers even if they are occupied in lawful means of earning.

Thus, this reprimand was not on the basis of reprimanding against a sin or an act of disobedience,

which would make it difficult to explain its meaning and reason. Rather, it is a reprimand like that of a father to his children.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has noted some very excellent points which deserve to be written in gold.

No commentator has explained this sūrah in the manner explained by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Look at what a beautiful couplet he quoted:

> Do not gauge the actions of the pure ones against your own because although the words *sher* and *sher* appear to be exactly the same, the meaning of each one is different.[1]

This couplet alone is enough to answer the objection. Despite this, look at what a beautiful point he made when he said that although the blind Sahābī could not see the changes in the facial expressions of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, others were seeing the changes. They would have assumed that this shows partiality towards the wealthy and disregard for the poor. Allāh *taʿālā* wanted that even the inkling of an accusation must not be levelled against His beloved [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*]. Allāh *taʿālā* revealed these verses to teach Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that he must abstain from situations of doubt and misgiving as well. Subsequently this is exactly what happened. For the rest of his blessed life he never looked frowningly at

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[1] The first one means "a lion" and the second means "milk". There is a major difference between the two. This is an excellent answer which leaves no room for objection.

any poor person, and he never acquiesced before the wealthy.

However, by the grace of Allāh *ta'ālā* and the blessings of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, I say that the partiality towards the wealthy and the disregard for the poor which people were seeing, they wouldn't have regarded them as such. Those who were seeing it were either unbelievers of believers. The unbelievers would not have regarded it as such because they themselves were thirsty for that preferential treatment and they wanted Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* to disregard the poor. Why, then, should they accuse him of it? As for the sincere believers, their faith in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was not so weak that they would lose it over trivial matters. They were devoted and loyal followers. They had remained firm and resolute in major situations and slippery circumstances. They would never have brought such ignoble thoughts about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* over this one manner of treatment. They were very far from such thoughts. They understood that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was explaining the truthfulness of tauhīd, and the despicability of unbelief and polytheism. It was obviously a most important matter. The blind Sahābī's interjection neither made sense nor was it in line with the principles of the Sharī'at. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* frowned and expressed his disapproval. In this way he taught the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* to desist in situations of this nature and they must not interject.

Nonetheless, Allāh's training of His beloved was far loftier – that he must not adopt such a mannerism in situations of this nature. Instead, he must explain to the seekers in a soft manner, and he must not hurt

the feelings of the poor seekers in favour of the wealthy non-seekers. After all, you [Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] are on the highest pedestal of sound character and you have imbibed the character of Allāh *taʿālā*. No one can ever imagine and allege from your treatment, that you are being partial towards the wealthy and disregarding the poor. However, when your followers see this, they will not be able to remain within the limits. They will make it their norm to see to the wealthy and disregard the poor totally. This will obviously hurt the feelings of the poor.

Generally the majority of the seekers are the poor people. If they lose hope and give up learning and teaching, the entire system will collapse. This is why when that blind S̲ah̲ābī came to you, you should have addressed the wealthy and said: "Although it will mean stopping my conversation with you, you will have to wait a little. I will speak to him quickly and dispense with him." You should have then turned to the blind S̲ah̲ābī and said: "I am presently speaking to the Quraysh leaders on important aspects of Islam. They have been sitting here from the beginning and I am still conversing with them. You can come at some other time and I will teach you. If you permit, I will continue my conversation with them." The blind S̲ah̲ābī would have obviously agreed with the suggestion and given his permission.

I am explaining this solely through the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. After all, I am nothing. I hope you enjoyed this explanation and approve of it.

No matter what, this sūrah contains a powerful teaching. That is, never ever give preferential treatment to the wealthy to the extent that it breaks

the heart of the poor. It is most reprehensible to do this.

Rasūlullāh’s beautiful treatment of the blind Sahābī

Another objective of this sūrah is to convey to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that there is no need for him to hanker after the wealthy people. He should rather remain independent. Just as he has poor followers, he will have wealthy followers who will be loyal to him. It is in Our power to turn them towards you. There is no need for you to pursue them nor do you have to flatter them. All you have to do is teach and train the seeker who comes to you. This is the method of training and this is your responsibility.

Rasūlullāh’s interaction with this Sahābī changed completely after the revelation of these verses. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went personally to his house and apologized to him. He then took him to his own house, laid out his blessed shawl for him, and seated him on it. Later on, whenever he attended Rasūlullāh’s assembly, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* would receive him warmly and say:

مرحبا بمن عاتبني فيه ربي

Welcome to the one about whom my Allāh reprimanded me.

Whenever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met him anywhere, he would say to him: “You must let me know if you need anything.” In fact, there were two occasions when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went on a journey and appointed him as the imām for salāh in his place. This was his treatment of

the blind Sahābī. As for the other poor people, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became extremely soft and lenient towards them. It is related that after the revelation of these verses, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* never became angry at any poor person, and he never pursued any wealthy person.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and see how he carried out Allāh's orders.

A word of caution to the ʻulamā and mashā'ikh

What right do the ʻulamā' and mashā'ikh have to act contrary to this? This is the beautiful example shown by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Without it no ʿālim is a true ʿālim and no shaykh is a genuine shaykh. It is necessary for everyone to follow this Sunnat. The genuine ʻulamā' of this ummat adopted this way and practised on it.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

تأدب الناس أدبًا حسنًا

The people learnt beautiful character from this incident.

I related to you the story of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* and how the wealthy people in his assembly used to hope that they were poor so that they could get the opportunity to sit close to him. That is how much he practised on the verses of the Qur'ān and the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib

Our Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* had very pleasant character and he would receive everyone with genuine warmth. When wealthy people came to him, he would receive them warmly and honourably, and say: "I am not honouring them because they are wealthy, but because of *niʿma*. Because a Hadīth states:

نعم الأمير على باب الفقير

Excellent indeed is the wealthy person at the door of a poor person.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how he adhered to the Sunnat and how knowledge of Hadīth was present before him. This is known as *ʿilm ladunnī* (Allāh bestowed knowledge)

An important investigative decision

Abstaining from pursuing the wealthy most certainly does not mean that one must pay no attention to them and that one must be ill-mannered towards them. Rather, what it means is that when the wealthy and poor assemble in one place, the poor must not get the impression that they are being looked down upon because of their poorness. This will obviously hurt their feelings. A person must be guarded in situations of this nature.

If wealthy people come as seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* and present themselves for rectification, attention must be paid to them. Their quest and capabilities will be observed, and they will not be disregarded because of their affluence. Thus, the basis for paying attention to a person is his capability and quest. If a person comes with genuine quest and yearning, full attention will be

paid to him, even if his is poor and downtrodden. As stated previously by Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* that many poor people become guiding lamps for entire countries and continents by virtue of their capabilities. Thus, the expectation of all-encompassing benefit [to the creation] must be according to the power of capability in the seeker. It will be most short-sighted to be deceived by the large number of wealthy people who are devoid of capabilities.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* makes a very pertinent point. It is really these personalities who understand the meaning of the verses of the Qur'ān.

We learn from the above that excellence in a shaykh lies in his ability to consider the capabilities of the seekers, and to train them according to the level of their capabilities. If they possess lofty capabilities, full attention and focus must be given to their training. It must not happen that attention is given to incapable people while the genuine seekers lose out in the process. When compared to the time which is spent on a non-seeker to develop a quest in him, a person who already has the capabilities and quest will have received his training by then, and will start benefiting others.

Look at that blind Sahābī and what capabilities he possessed! Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu 'anhu* narrates that he saw him in the Battle of Qādisīyyah clad in an armour, sitting on a horse with a black flag in front of him, and attacking the ranks of the unbelievers despite his blindness.

This is indeed a great piece of information. To be near the flag is a most important position in the battlefield. That is where arrows from all sides descend and swords work the most. It is no easy task – especially

for a blind man – to withstand all that, defend himself, and still attack the unbelievers.

Listen! The fact of the matter is that he was a devoted Companion of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He acquired internal eyesight by virtue of his companionship with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He could see just as those who have external eyes. In fact, more than the external eyes, he had a special internal light with which he was able to see everything, defend himself and attack the enemy. Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly confers these eyes to the Ahlullāh by His grace. Consequently, they are able to perceive internal things which a person with external eyes cannot perceive.

Whatever the blind Sahābī had was because of his capability – after all, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* appointed him as the imām for salāh in Madīnah Munawwarah on two occasions. Appointing a blind Sahābī to this position despite there being so many Sahābah who had eyesight was obviously because of certain special qualities which he possessed.

Noble character surpasses the miracle of splitting the moon

Now listen to another point. It was no small matter that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* abstained from frowning at a poor person after the revelation of these verses. There may have been many incidents with poor people which could have disturbed his blessed temperament. Yet, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* controlled himself to the extent that the effects of displeasure were never visible on his face is indeed a great miracle. In fact, I can take an oath and say that it is a miracle which is superior to his

miracle of splitting the moon. The laity consider the splitting of the moon to be a major miracle, but the scholars are of the view that the noble character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is far more superior. This is because it is beyond a human to have such noble characteristics. It is a supernatural feat, and this is what you call a miracle.

Note: Those who have some knowledge of the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can fully understand the significant point which is made by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It ought to be written in gold. In fact, it ought to be imprinted in our hearts. (compiler)

Now listen to another point: This sūrah is a clear proof of the prophet-hood of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and an obvious testimony to his being a true Prophet. He is being reprimanded over a specific matter and the incident is described in detail. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* presents it in its totality without withholding anything to the ummat. This is a glittering proof of his genuineness and truthfulness. A false claimant will only mention things which are in praise of him and in his favour. He will never ever disclose those aspects of his life from which wrong results can be deduced.

Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* has explained a very beautiful correlation between this sūrah and the one before it. I am relating the gist of it. In the previous sūrah (Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt), Allāh *taʿālā* taught the principles and rules of propagation to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. In the present sūrah Allāh *taʿālā* teaches Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* an important principle in the field of spiritual purification and training. Both were Prophets who were endowed with resoluteness,

and so both were taught according to their individual conditions and eras. Pharaoh was an unjust tyrant who wielded immense power. He had the power to use whatever he wanted. Allāh *taʿālā* ordered H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* to adopt a lenient approach. Allāh *taʿālā* even taught him what words he should utter. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِذْهَبْ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهُ طَغٰى. فَقُلْ هَلْ لَّكَ اِلٰى اَنْ تَزَكّٰى. وَاَهْدِيَكَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشٰى.

Go to Pharaoh, for he has certainly transgressed. Then say to him: "Are you desirous of being purified? And that I show you the path to your Lord so that you may then fear [Him]?"[1]

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* derives a most important principle from this verse. He writes:

> O Mūsā! You must speak softly to the Pharaoh of the time (because) if boiling water is poured over oil, it will burn the cauldron and the cook. Speak leniently but not incorrectly. Do not cause whisperings in speaking leniently.

The commentator to the above couplets says that the address must not be so soft and lenient that the addressee experiences whisperings about the falseness of your religion.[2]

Now listen to the gist of the above discussion. This sūrah teaches very lofty characteristics. Disregarding the poor, especially for mashā'ikh and teachers to

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 17-19.

[2] *Mathnawī Sharīf*, vol. 4, p. 92.

disregard them, can never be tolerated. It is necessary to teach them according to their capabilities. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that the reason for naming this sūrah "Sūrah 'Abasa" is so that teachers and guides will always bear in mind the condition of the seekers and students. By merely hearing the name of this sūrah, they will be reminded of this incident and they will take admonition from it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just admire the knowledge and sciences of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*! We ought to imprint them in our hearts. O Allāh! Inspire us towards goodness and rectitude. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE CHIEF OF THE MESSENGERS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* placed the *Gulistān* and *Būstān* in front of him and said:

These are no ordinary books. Countless people practised on their teachings and adopted the etiquette described in them and became walīs. The speaker is recognized by his speech. It is from his speech that we can gauge the level of his expertise and excellence. A *mukammal* person is one from whose teachings people acquire the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* and closeness to Him; and they themselves become people of erudition. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* [the author of *Gulistān* and *Būstān*] is the disciple of Shaykh Hadrat Shihāb ad-Dīn Sahrawardī *rahimahullāh* who is from among the Sufi masters. Hadrat Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* makes reference to him in the following couplets:

> My blessed and intelligent shaykh, Shaykh Shihāb ad-Dīn Sahrawardī gave me two words of advice while travelling by ship: (1) Do not look at yourself with self-conceit. (2) Do not look at others with an evil eye.

He quotes two pieces of advice of his shaykh. (1) Do not look approvingly at your own excellences. If a person looks at his own excellences he will be destroyed. (2) Do not have bad thoughts about another person because he may well be a righteous man. By focussing on his faults, you will be deprived of his blessings.

Glory to Allāh! What excellent pieces of advice which ought to be written in gold. These were the teachings of our seniors. Many people acquired spirituality

through them and reached Allāh *taʿālā*. Unfortunately, people of today have discarded these teachings but still want to acquire Allāh's proximity and are desirous of meeting the saints of Dīn. How can this happen?! After all, this is a spiritual path, it is not a physical one. It cannot be traversed through physical strength. Rather, it can be traversed by following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* writes:

> The one who follows a path which is against that of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

In the above couplet, Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* is actually explaining the following instruction of Allāh *taʿālā*:

اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

It is therefore essential to follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Those who traversed this path and were successful did so solely by emulating Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In the same way, it is necessary to follow the teachings of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* when praising him. It is not permissible to go beyond the bounds in praising him. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says:

لا تطروني كما اطرت النصارى ابن مريم (البخاري)

Do not transgress the limits in praising me as was done by the Christians with H̲ad̲rat ʿĪsā ʿalayhis salām.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

The Christians went to the extent of claiming that Hadrat ʿIsā *ʿalayhis salām* was the son of God. Similarly, the Jews believed that Hadrat ʿUzayr *ʿalayhis salām* was the son of God. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to this:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُوْدُ عُزَيْرُ ابْنُ اللهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصٰرَى الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ اللهِ

The Jews said: "Uzayr is the son of Allāh." The Christians said: "Masīh is the son of Allāh".[1]

This is the transgressing of limits which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited. Writing couplets in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a very tricky, intricate and difficult science. The ʿulamā' say that if a person becomes madly in love with Allāh *taʿālā* and in his intoxication, he says something against Allāh *taʿālā*, he will be pardoned because it was said in a state of intoxication. On the other hand, if anyone says something against Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a state of intoxication, he will be taken to task immediately. This is why we see the Sufis are very cautious in saying anything about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. They were fully conscious of the respect and honour which he deserves. They feared saying anything disrespectful and were restricted in their poetical compositions. If they slipped in the least, they will be taken to task. In other words, they will be seized by Allāh *taʿālā*.

A saint said something about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which was inappropriate. However, because he was a qualified shaykh, he came to his senses and realized that he uttered an incorrect

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 30.

statement. He made up for his mistake by waking up at 2am on cold winter nights, standing in cold water, and saying: "May the Sharīʿat of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* remain strong and eternal." He used to repeat these words and continued doing this for six months. Once he was convinced that he has been pardoned, he stopped this action.

Selflessness is necessary for Allāh's love, but there must be no selflessness in praising Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rather, it requires vigilance, consciousness and full understanding. Although the two are total opposites, if they are not present, a person will be deficient. A perfect person is one who combines love and recognition. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* combined both. That is, he possessed perfect love and perfect recognition. He also had a very high level of intelligence. The *naʿt* which he composed in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* makes mention of his excellent qualities. Shaykh Saʿdī does not transgress the limits at any point. He writes the following in his *Gulistān* in his description of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

> The chief of the universe and the pride of the world. The mercy to the world, the most superior among all humans, the one who perfected time.[1]

Glory to Allāh! What beautiful words! Who can write anything better than this!? This couplet encompasses everything. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the chief of the universe, the pride of the creation, the mercy to the world, this chief of the Messengers and the seal of the Prophets.

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 6.

These people have guided many people and conveyed many others to the highest levels of spirituality. Now if you don't understand it or do not listen to it, what can I do? He says thereafter:

شفيع مطاع نبي كريم – قسيم جسيم نسيم وسيم

He is an intercessor. He is one who is obeyed. He is a noble Prophet. He is the distributor who is handsome, fragrant and beautiful.[1]

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is an intercessor in the Hereafter and obeyed in this world. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ

We did not send any Messenger except for the purpose that his order be obeyed by the decree of Allāh.[2]

In the Hereafter he will be the *shafīʿ al-mudhnibīn* – the one who will intercede on behalf of the sinners. The intercession of everyone else will be dependent on his intercession. In other words, when everyone will be terrified by the severities of the day of Resurrection, they will say: "It will be better if the decision is passed as quickly as possible – whether for reward or punishment." The people will go to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and request them to intercede on their behalf so that the accounting of deeds may commence. No one will have the courage to go before Allāh *taʿālā* with this request. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and Auliyā' will decline. People will go to *Shafīʿ al-mudhnibīn s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 7.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 64.

and ask him to intercede. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will say: "Yes, today is the day when I will intercede." Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will present himself in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*, fall into prostration, and praise Him in a manner which – as per the words of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – he does not know how much he will praise Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* will say: "O Muh̲ammad! Raise your head and ask whatever you wish. Your request will be accepted." The accounting of deeds for the entire creation will commence. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will then intercede on behalf of the sinners. The manner and extent in which he will intercede cannot be imagined. Just imagine the kindness and affection of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for the sinners of his ummat. My heart desires to quote the following couplet:

> Why should the wall of the ummat worry when it has someone like you as its guardian? Why should the ship fear the waves of the ocean whose captain is Nūh̲ *ʿalayhis salām*?

بلغ العلی بکماله – کشف الدجی بجماله

حسنت جمیع خصاله – صلّوا علیه وآله

He reached lofty heights through his excellence. He removed darkness through his beauty. All the qualities of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam are excellent. Send salutations to him and his family.[1]

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[1] *Gulistān*, p. 7.

In other words, Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam reached lofty heights through his excellence and perfection. He reached a position which no other Messenger or angel reached. The light of his beauty removed the pitch darkness of unbelief and misguidance. All his qualities are exceptional. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّكَ لَعَلٰى خُلُقٍ عَظِيْمٍ

You are certainly on a lofty pedestal of sound character.

If Allāh *taʿālā* testifies to the loftiness of his character and qualities, what can we say?

Send salutations to him and his family because Allāh *taʿālā* and all the angels constantly send salutations to him. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا.

Allāh and His angels send mercy to the Prophet. O believers! Send mercy to him and salute him with salutations of peace.[1]

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes a concise *naʿt* (praise of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*) in the introduction to his *Gulistān* and then explains it in detail in his *Būstān*. My heart desires to present some of it to you. He says:

كريم السجايا جميل الشيم – نبي البرايا شفيع الأمم

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[1] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 56.

He has excellent qualities and beautiful characteristics. He is the Prophet of all creations and the intercessor for all nations.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says further on:

> He is the imām of all the Prophets and the guide on the path. He is the trusted one of Allāh *taʿālā* and the one to whom Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* descended.
>
> He is the intercessor for the nations and the chief of the Resurrection. He is the imām of guidance and the chief of the court of the Resurrection.
>
> He is the *kalīm* whose Tur is the heavens. All other lights are reflections of his light.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* is known as *Kalīmullāh* because he used to converse a lot with Allāh *taʿālā*. He spoke to Allāh *taʿālā* on Mt. Tūr while Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* spoke to Allāh *taʿālā* in the heavens.

> He is such an orphan that although the Qur'ān hadn't been revealed in its entirety as yet, he abrogated the libraries of all other religions.
>
> When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* merely intended to unsheathe the sword of fear, the moon was miraculously split into two.

Reference is made to the miracle of splitting the moon into two. There is so much of power in the resolution of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that by his mere intention, the moon was split into two.

> When the people of the world began speaking about the birth of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, the palace of Kisrā experienced an earthquake.

Reference is made to the night when Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was born. The palace of Nausherwā experienced an earthquake and 14 of its parapets collapsed.

> Through the *Lā* of *Lā Ilāha Illallāh*, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reduced Lāt to bits. He gave power to Islam and reduced ʿUzzā to dust.
>
> He did not suffice with putting an end to the power of Lāt and ʿUzzā. Rather, he abrogated the Taurāh and Injīl as well.[1]

The word *Lā* refers to the kalimah tauh̲īd (*Lā Ilāha Illallāh*). What this means is that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* elevated this kalimah to such a level that Lāt, ʿUzzā and all idols collapsed and their honour was reduced to dust.

H̲ad̲rat Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* undoubtedly explained every single quality of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a most beautiful manner. In-between all this, I just recalled a couplet of Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* in which he praises Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a most eloquent manner. In it, he maintained the creed of tauh̲īd while praising Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a manner which suited him. He says:

> The words *Lā Ilāha* negate everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, thus, he is also

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[1] *Būstān*, p. 6.

> negated. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became a *Lā*. However, he is residing in the side of the word *Illā*. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* affirms the messenger-ship of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the kalimah tauhīd.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* then speaks about the Miʿrāj.

> Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* journeyed one night and went past the heavens as well. He even went beyond the great and close angels. The Burāq galloped so fast on the field of Allāh's proximity that on reaching Sidratul Muntahā, Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* had to halt there. The chief of Bayt al-Harām [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*] said to Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*: "O bearer of divine revelation, come up. When you have found Me to be a sincere friend, why are you turning your reins away from my companionship? Why are you leaving me alone?" Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "It is totally beyond me to go further because I am absolutely weak and there is no strength in my wings. If I were to fly up for the distance of even the breadth of a hair, the divine lights will reduce my wings to ash." The manifestation of Allāh's light is beyond this point, and Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* does not have the power and strength to bear it. It was only for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* who was given the ability to bear Allāh's special light.

The Mi’rāj was a physical journey

There are various narrations about the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Was it a physical Miʿrāj or a spiritual one. The majority of the narrations and the most authentic ones demonstrate that it was a physical journey, and that Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam personally went up with his physical body. However, the body had taken the order of the soul in such a way that Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was able to go beyond the point which Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām could go.

The spiritual strength of Rasūlullāh

On one occasion Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked H̱aḏrat Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām to show himself in his original form. He replied: “You will probably not be able to bear it.” When Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam persisted, he showed himself in his original form and Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam became unconscious.

It is related that when Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam saw H̱aḏrat Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām for the first time, he became terrified and restless, and he came to H̱aḏrat Khadījah raḏiyallāhu ʿanhā asking her to cover him with a blanket.

Now when Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam reached Sidratul Muntahā and H̱aḏrat Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām said to him: “O bearer of divine revelation, you may now proceed further [because I cannot go beyond this point]”, then Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam reminded him of the time when he had asked him to show him his original form and how he became terrified when he saw him.

We could say that the angelic qualities of Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* had overpowered the human qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. And on the occasion of Mi'rāj, a similar condition was experienced by Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām*. The angelic qualities of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* had become extremely powerful which Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* himself acknowledged. Hadrat Shaykh Sa'dī *rahimahullāh* expresses the same theme in the following couplet:

> Now only you can proceed beyond this point. It is not within me to proceed further.

It is mentioned in *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt* that Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* states towards the end of the fourth register of his *Mathnawī* (in his explanation of the Hadīth wherein Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* goes to Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu 'anhā* and asks her to cover him) that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* was certainly affected by Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* but the effect was not experienced by the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* but by his physical body. On the other hand, the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* is such that Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* could not bear it. This is the crux of his explanation.

A few emotional couplets

At this point I feel it appropriate to quote a few couplets of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh*.

When Hadrat Jibra'īl *'alayhis salām* saw Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* unconscious due to his fear, he immediately took him into his lap. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* lost consciousness

because the acceptance of a change is from among the qualities of the body (and not of the soul). The soul which is glittering like the sun remains forever. Bearing in mind that the body of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also has physical qualities, this change (of external unconsciousness) occurred in compliance with the body. Understand this well.

The reason why Rasūlullāh's blessed body fell unconscious when it saw H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* is that his soul went into a type of frenzy when it saw H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. This is because in Jibra'īl it visualized the effulgence of Allāh *taʿālā* and got drowned in the ocean of visualization. This affected the physical body and unconsciousness overcame him. Whereas the essence of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is such that if he where to expose his spirituality and angelic qualities, Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* would have remained unconscious forever. Thus, we see that when Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* advanced beyond Sidratul Muntahā, he asked Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* to join him. To which Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* said that he may continue but it is not within him to advance any further.

A beautiful explanation given by H̲ājī Imdādullāh

H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* quoted a most beautiful explanation to the H̲adīth[1] wherein Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went to H̲ad̲rat Khadījah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* and asked her to cover him. If you were to read it with understanding,

[1] This H̲adīth is hereafter referred to as the H̲adīth of *zammilūnī zammilūnī*.

you will be overcome by ecstasy. The following is mentioned in *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt*.

Khān Sāhib said that the Hadīth of *zammilūnī zammilūnī* was mentioned in the presence of Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time, and he returned trembling to Hadrat Khadījah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, he asked her to cover him with a blanket. Someone asked Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: "Did Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* become scared of Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*?" He replied in the negative. Rather, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* could not bear his reality all at once when it was exposed to him when he looked at Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. There is a principle that when you live among those who are not of your own species then your own reality becomes hidden. It is only exposed when you see someone from your own species. Like the famous story of a person who domesticated a lion cub and left it among his goats. The lion was not aware of its reality while living among the goats. It also behaved like them. Incidentally, it saw its reflection while it was drinking water. When it saw its face, its bravery and pluck came before its eyes.

When it looked at the goats around it, it realized that it is not a goat; it is something else. When the reality dawned upon it, it went among the goats and gave vent to its lion-ness. It ate some of the goats and tore open others.

Hadrat then said: Imagine there is an island on which all ugly people live. One most beautiful fairy-like woman is then born there. Because she is living among them, she will consider herself to be just like them. The reality of her beauty will not be known to

her. Therefore, she will neither display any pride nor coquetry. But if she coincidentally comes across another person who is as beautiful as her, and who shows off her beauty, etc. her reality will dawn upon her and she too will become proud and coquettish.

In the same way, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was like that lion and that beautiful woman among the ignorant people of Makkah, and his reality hadn't dawned upon him. But no sooner he set eyes on Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* who was from his species – in the sense that Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* is directly trained by Allāh *taʿālā* because he has the responsibility of bringing down divine revelation and the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are also directly trained by Allāh *taʿālā* and they receive divine revelation – Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw his own reality in the face of Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. However, it was so great and majestic that he could not bear it all at once. He trembled and shivered, and said *zammilūnī zammilūnī*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly did not become frightened of Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*.

Khān Sāhib used to say that Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā Mahmūd al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to relate the above incident to me again and again, and he would sway in ecstasy.[1]

Each of these two seniors [Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*] explained this Hadīth according to his own inclination and taste. Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* said that the body of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was affected by Hadrat

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[1] *Amīr ar-Riwāyāt*, p. 136.

Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* and said that the essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not affected. The essence of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is so great that Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* cannot bear it. Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not affected by Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. Rather, his reality dawned upon him when he saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*, and it was so great and majestic that he could not bear it all at once. He became restless and said *zammilūnī zammilūnī*. He did not become scared of Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* in the least.

I would like to explain this topic to you in some detail. *Bukhārī Sharīf* contains a Hadīth narrated by Hadrat 'A'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* which explains how revelation commenced. It reads as follows:

أَوَّلُ مَا بُدِئَ بِهِ رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم مِنَ الْوَحْيِ الرُّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ فِي النَّوْمِ، فَكَانَ لاَ يَرَى رُؤْيَا إِلاَّ جَاءَتْ مِثْلَ فَلَقِ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ حُبِّبَ إِلَيْهِ الْخَلاَءُ، وَكَانَ يَخْلُو بِغَارِ حِرَاءٍ فَيَتَحَنَّثُ فِيهِ ـ وَهُوَ التَّعَبُّدُ ـ اللَّيَالِيَ ذَوَاتِ الْعَدَدِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَنْزِعَ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ، وَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِذَلِكَ، ثُمَّ يَرْجِعُ إِلَى خَدِيجَةَ، فَيَتَزَوَّدُ لِمِثْلِهَا، حَتَّى جَاءَهُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ فِي غَارِ حِرَاءٍ، فَجَاءَهُ الْمَلَكُ فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قَالَ: مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. قَالَ: فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. قُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّانِيَةَ حَتَّى بَلَغَ مِنِّي الْجَهْدَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ اقْرَأْ. فَقُلْتُ مَا أَنَا بِقَارِئٍ. فَأَخَذَنِي فَغَطَّنِي الثَّالِثَةَ، ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَنِي فَقَالَ: اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ. خَلَقَ الإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ. اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الأَكْرَمُ. فَرَجَعَ بِهَا رَسُولُ اللهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَرْجُفُ فُؤَادُهُ،

فَدَخَلَ عَلَى خَدِيجَةَ بِنْتِ خُوَيْلِدٍ رضى الله عنها فَقَالَ " زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي ". فَزَمَّلُوهُ حَتَّى ذَهَبَ عَنْهُ الرَّوْعُ، فَقَالَ لِخَدِيجَةَ وَأَخْبَرَهَا الْخَبَرَ " لَقَدْ خَشِيتُ عَلَى نَفْسِي ". فَقَالَتْ خَدِيجَةُ كَلاَّ وَاللَّهِ مَا يُخْزِيكَ اللَّهُ أَبَدًا، إِنَّكَ لَتَصِلُ الرَّحِمَ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْكَلَّ، وَتَكْسِبُ الْمَعْدُومَ، وَتَقْرِي الضَّيْفَ، وَتُعِينُ عَلَى نَوَائِبِ الْحَقِّ. فَانْطَلَقَتْ بِهِ خَدِيجَةُ حَتَّى أَتَتْ بِهِ وَرَقَةَ بْنَ نَوْفَلِ بْنِ أَسَدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ الْعُزَّى ابْنَ عَمِّ خَدِيجَةَ ـ وَكَانَ امْرَأً تَنَصَّرَ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ، وَكَانَ يَكْتُبُ الْكِتَابَ الْعِبْرَانِيَّ، فَيَكْتُبُ مِنَ الإِنْجِيلِ بِالْعِبْرَانِيَّةِ مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ، وَكَانَ شَيْخًا كَبِيرًا قَدْ عَمِيَ ـ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ خَدِيجَةُ يَا ابْنَ عَمِّ اسْمَعْ مِنَ ابْنِ أَخِيكَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ يَا ابْنَ أَخِي مَاذَا تَرَى فَأَخْبَرَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم خَبَرَ مَا رَأَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ وَرَقَةُ هَذَا النَّامُوسُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى مُوسَى صلى الله عليه وسلم يَا لَيْتَنِي فِيهَا جَذَعًا، لَيْتَنِي أَكُونُ حَيًّا إِذْ يُخْرِجُكَ قَوْمُكَ. فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم " أَوَمُخْرِجِيَّ هُمْ ". قَالَ نَعَمْ، لَمْ يَأْتِ رَجُلٌ قَطُّ بِمِثْلِ مَا جِئْتَ بِهِ إِلاَّ عُودِيَ، وَإِنْ يُدْرِكْنِي يَوْمُكَ أَنْصُرْكَ نَصْرًا مُؤَزَّرًا. ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْشَبْ وَرَقَةُ أَنْ تُوُفِّيَ.

The commencement of divine revelation to Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright day light, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hirā' where he used to worship (Allāh alone) continuously for many days before his desire to see his family. He used to take with him food for the duration of his stay and then come back to his wife Hadrat Khadījah to take his food like-wise again till suddenly the Truth descended upon him

while he was in the cave of Hirā'. The angel came to him and asked him to read. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam replied: "I do not know how to read." The Prophet added, "The angel caught me (forcefully) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied: "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, "I do not know how to read." Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, "Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous."

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam returned from there with his heart beating severely. He went straight to Khadījah bint Khuwaylid and said: "Cover me! Cover me!" The people covered him till that condition was over. He then told her everything that had happened and said: "I fear that something may happen to me." Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā replied: "Never! By Allāh, Allāh will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones."

Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah ibn Naufal ibn Asad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, who, during the pre-Islamic, period became a Christian. He knew how to write the ʿIbrānī language and he would write from the Injīl as much as Allāh wished him to write. He was an old man who had lost his eyesight. Khadījah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said to Waraqah: "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!" Waraqah asked: "O my nephew! What have

you seen?" Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam described whatever he had seen. Waraqah said: "This is the same angel who used to bring divine revelation to Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would drive you out." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam asked: "Will they drive me out?" Waraqah replied in the affirmative and said: "Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive till the day when you will be turned out then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqah passed away.

This Hadīth clearly states that revelation to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* commenced in the form of true dreams. Before receiving prophet-hood, the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* first see things in their dreams so that they develop a gradual affinity with that world and they are able to bear it. Once revelation starts coming to them in a state of wakefulness, they are able to bear it easily and also bear the weight of prophet-hood. Another point which we learn from this Hadīth is that after seeing the true dreams, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined towards solitude. It is necessary to remember this much that even here, those who are to receive something will first see good dreams, they will become inclined towards solitude, and their affinity with it will increase. The reason for this is that since the prophet-hood of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* commenced with true dreams, wilāyat also commences in this way. After all, wilāyat is subservient to prophet-hood. Thus, whatever took place in prophet-hood will necessarily take place in wilāyat. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined towards solitude in the beginning,

you find the righteous personalities also becoming inclined to it. The fact of the matter is that when the quest for Allāh *taʿālā* supersedes everything, the person likes nothing better than solitude. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became inclined to solitude and began frequenting the cave of Hirā’ where he used to engage in worship, perform salāh, engage in Allāh’s remembrance, and so on.

A poet says:

> When I choose separation from the entire creation, Allāh *taʿālā* becomes my companion in the cave.

Now we notice that people have no affinity whatsoever with the things which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* loved but we are ready to claim that we love him.

وكل يدعي وصلًا بليلٰى – وليلٰى لا تقر لهم بذات

Everyone claims to have a bond with Laylā, but Laylā does not affirm it in respect of anyone.

What I am saying is that these things cannot be acquired by mere claims. Rather, a person must obliterate himself in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* You cannot reach Allāh *taʿālā* without Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as your intermediary.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* was a mentor of his time. He taught us many things and explained many things to us. (I am saying these things in-between so that you people remain attentive. I now return to the original topic).

From the previously-quoted Hadīth, we learn the status of a dream. Prophet-hood commences with true

dreams. It is a glad-tiding from Allāh *taʿālā*. He says in this regard:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ؕ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

We learn from this verse that the Auliyā' are those who have perfect īmān and perfect taqwā. These may appear to be just two words [īmān and taqwā], but to adopt them is more difficult than carrying a mountain. It has become even more difficult in our times.

It is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* that Hadrat ʿUbādah ibn Sāmit *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates: I asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for an explanation of the words: "For them are glad tidings in the worldly life." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

هي الرؤيا الصالحة يراها المؤمن أو ترٰى له.

The glad tidings are true dreams which a believer sees or people see in his favour.

Another narration states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

أما قوله تعالى لهم البشرى في الحيوة الدنيا، فهي الرؤيا الحسنة ترى للمؤمن فبشر بها في دنياه، وأما قوله سبحانه وفي الآخرة، فإنها بشارة المؤمن عند الموت أن الله قد غفر لك ولمن حملك إلى قبر.

As for Allāh taʿālā saying: "For them are glad tidings in this worldly life", they refer to good dreams which a believer sees and through which he receives glad tidings in his worldly life. As for Allāh taʿālā saying: "And in the Hereafter", it refers to the glad tiding which a believer receives at the time of death – that Allāh taʿālā has forgiven you and whoever carries you to the grave.

Hadrat 'Atā' *rahimahullāh* says that glad tidings in this world is that when a believer is about to die, the angels of mercy come to him and give him the glad tidings of Paradise. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ.

Angels descend upon them [saying]: "Do not fear, nor grieve! Listen to the glad tiding of Paradise which you were promised."[1]

The glad tidings in the Hereafter will be that the angels will meet the believers by offering salām to them, giving them the glad tiding of success, they will see the glitter on their faces, they will be given their book of deeds in their right hands, and they will rejoice when they read the record of their deeds.

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 30.

Another view is that glad tidings of this world include: help and assistance from Allāh *taʿālā*, victory, booty, good praises from people, people speaking good of a person, people loving the person, and so on. As for the glad tidings of the Hereafter, there is no need to even speak about them. (That is all).

My sole objective was to show you that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained the words: "For them are glad tidings in this worldly life" as true dreams. However, in order to complete the benefit, I quoted other narrations which are related with respect to this verse. I now return to my previous topic.

Fath al-Bārī – a commentary of *Sahīh Bukhārī* relates from Hadrat 'Ā'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* who said that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to see dreams in the beginning. He first beheld Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* at Ajyād. Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* called out: "O Muhammad!" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked around but did not see anybody. He then looked up towards the sky and he saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* who then said to him: "O Muhammad! I am Jibra'īl." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ran in his direction and went through the people. Then when he saw nothing, he went out. Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* called out again and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ran in his direction. Subsequently, Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* appeared before him at the cave of Hirā' and the story of "Read" which is related in the Hadīth took place.

Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* had two wings of sapphires at the time when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* beheld him. They were glittering to the extent that they were dazzling the eyes. (Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat

Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* in his original form on one occasion) and he saw him again in his original form on the occasion of Miʿrāj. This narration clearly shows that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw him in his original form on two occasions and he was able to bear seeing him. He heard and understood his speech. When Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was going on Miʿrāj, H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* was with him from the very beginning and he was in his original form. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* too was looking at him from the point of a human, and was able to bear him. When they reached that world, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was in an angelic world and so was H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*. When they reached Sidratul Muntahā, there was a conflict between Rasūlullāh's angelic and spiritual powers, and Jibra'īl's angelic power. Rasūlullāh's angelic power overwhelmed it, this is why he could proceed beyond Sidratul Muntahā. He met Allāh *taʿālā*, went especially close to Him, and conversed with Him. We do not know what they spoke about.

H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* had to stop at Sidratul Muntahā and he said: "If I move the slightest bit forward, I will burn to ash." The rank of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can be gauged from this, and also his spiritual power. We know how powerful H̲ad̲rat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* was. When the punishment was to be meted out to the people of H̲ad̲rat Lūt̲ *ʿalayhis salām*, he lifted all their villages with his finger, raised them up to the heavens, turned them upside down, and flung them down to earth. Despite all this power he could not go beyond Sidratul Muntahā, but Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went much further. From this you can gauge how

powerful Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam was and what spiritual strength he possessed.

As for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* experiencing a certain condition when he beheld Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time, that is from among the essentials of this world. This world cannot bear the things of that world. Allāh *taʿālā* conferred so much of power to the angels that if any one of them was to expose just a portion of his power to this world, it will be destroyed. A Hadīth states that if just one corner of the scarf of a damsel (hūr) of Paradise was to be exposed to this world, the sun and moon will go into eclipse. Therefore, when anything of that world displays itself in this world, it is not easy to bear it. When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* requested to see Allāh *taʿālā*, and He manifested Himself before a mountain, it could not bear Him and broke into smithereens. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَلَمَّا جَآءَ مُوْسٰى لِمِيْقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ أَرِنِيْ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۚ قَالَ لَنْ تَرٰنِيْ وَلٰكِنِ انْظُرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ فَسَوْفَ تَرٰنِيْ ۚ فَلَمَّا تَجَلّٰى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ دَكًّا وَّخَرَّ مُوْسٰى صَعِقًا ۚ فَلَمَّآ أَفَاقَ قَالَ سُبْحٰنَكَ تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "O my Lord! Show Yourself to me so that I may look upon You." He replied: "You will never see Me. However, keep looking towards the mountain, if it remains in its place, you will see Me. Then when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust and Mūsā fell down unconscious. When he regained consciousness,

he said: "Glory be to You! I have repented to You and I am the first to have conviction."[1]

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time (after the expiry of 40 days) and his Lord spoke to him. The conversation was so enjoyable and sweet that when Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* heard it, he lost control of himself. He fell in love with it and became desirous of seeing Allāh *taʿālā*. In this restless state he said: "O my Lord! Show Yourself to me so that I may look upon You." He replied: "You will never see Me." In other words, you do not have the ability to see Me while you are in your present state. That is, a human does not have the ability to see Allāh *taʿālā*. In fact, a human cannot even see an angel in his original form, no matter how high his rank. This is because this world cannot bear it. However, because Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was in a state of lovingness, Allāh *taʿālā* said to him as a consolation to him: "However, keep looking towards the mountain, if it remains in its place, you will see Me." Then when his Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He made it crumble to dust and Mūsā fell down unconscious.

The ʿulamā' say that the manifestation on the mountain took place but visualization did not take place. There is a difference between manifestation and visualization. You can understand it in this way: One is when you see a person directly and the other is when you see him in a mirror. What you see in the mirror is a reflection of the person but not the person himself. We will therefore not refer to it as *ru'yat* – sighting or visualization. In the same way, the manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā* was on the mountain and which the mountain could not bear. This is why it

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 143.

broke into smithereens and fell into the rivers and oceans. The manifestation of Allāh *taʿālā* on the mountain which Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* observed was so terrifying that if any non-Prophet saw it, he would have most likely died. But look at the strength of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* that even after seeing such a terrifying scene, he only lost consciousness and regained it after some time. His spiritual strength and power can be gauged from this. The slight effect which he experienced [by falling unconscious] does not affect his excellence in any way because when such a majestic scene which caused the mountain to crumble and him to only fall unconscious cannot be really referred to as an effect.

Allāh *taʿālā* blesses these personalities with the highest physical strength together with spiritual strength. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time and was affected by his sight, the reason for it was that Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* had come from the upper heavens to this lowly world with a most weighty thing – the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* – whose greatness and majesty can never be estimated. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says with reference to the Qur'ān:

لَوْ اَنْزَلْنَا هٰذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلٰى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللّٰهِ

Had We revealed this Qur'ān upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled, rendered asunder by the fear of Allāh.[1]

It is mentioned in the traditions that if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was incidentally sitting on a camel while revelation came down to him, the

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 21.

camel would sit down because it could not bear the weight of the revelation. Furthermore, when revelation used to come to him on the coldest of days, he would break out into perspiration. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* used to gauge from this that revelation is coming to him.

It was really the mark of Rasūlullāh's strength and his high status that the speech on account of which a mountain crumbled; and which the heavens, earth and mountains refused to bear, was borne by him. And the sight which Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* could not bear, was borne by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Whatever effect he experienced was on account of the greatness of the speech of Allāh *taʿālā*.

When a thing has the ability to effect, it will most certainly show its effect. For example, when a person is made to inhale chloroform, his brains stop functioning for some time. His senses become paralysed and he loses consciousness. In the same way, medicines have their respective effects. If someone strikes you, it will result in an injury or wound. If a person has a fever, it will show its effect. If a cold wind blows, you will feel cold. If a hot wind blows, you will feel the warmth. Whether the person is a walī or someone higher than him, each one will experience the effects of different things. Nonetheless, being affected by these things does not necessarily mean that there is a defect in the person because this is from among the essentials of our humanness and is unavoidable in this world. In fact, we should not even refer to these effects as effects. Because the real effect is what the mountain experienced when it crumbled and fell into the rivers and oceans. The condition which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*

experienced when he saw Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* for the first time was because he was still in a state of humanness, and suddenly a majestic thing with all its force and power from the angelic world came to him. This resulted in a conflict between the human and angelic worlds. However, because Allāh *taʿālā* had blessed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with the highest levels of spiritual and physical powers, he came to his senses immediately. If it was someone else, he would have been destroyed there and then. After all, it is certainly not easy to bear something as great as this in a sudden moment.

If there is any example which we could present in this regard then it is that of the cook of Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh*. A few guests came to Hadrat on one occasion. Coincidentally, there was no food which could be presented to the guests. There was a cook who lived nearby. He cooked some food from his side and presented it to Hadrat. Hadrat was overjoyed and said to the cook: "Ask me whatever you want." The cook asked: "Will I get whatever I ask for?" Hadrat replied in the affirmative. The cook said: "Will I really get whatever I ask for?" Hadrat replied in the affirmative. The cook asked the same question a third time and Hadrat gave the same reply. The cook said: "Make me like you." Hadrat said: "Don't ask for such a thing."

Hadrat Khwājah *rahimahullāh* must have assumed that he is a poor man, and the most he will ask for is probably a kingdom and he will give it to him. But he asked for something which he did not have the ability to bear as yet. When he persisted, Hadrat took him into a room, closed the door and focussed on him. When the door was opened and the two emerged from the room, the appearance of the cook had changed

and he looked exactly like Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh. No one could differentiate between the two. However, the cook departed from this worldly abode within a few days.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that the thing which Hadrat Khwājah Bāqī Billāh *rahimahullāh* took to acquire gradually over a period of 60 years, the cook acquired it in a short period of time. This is why he could not bear it.

I am saying to you that even the body of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was not affected. The light and weak effect which he experienced was really from among the essentials of this world. And this is no defect at all which could affect the status of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in any way. In fact, it is proof of even more excellence in him in the sense that such a powerful thing caused such a small effect on him. An effect of this nature occurs when a person sees anything that is new to him. Take the case of a new clay pot. When water is poured in it in the beginning, a hissing sound is heard. Once it absorbs the water fully and accepts its effect, that sound is no longer heard. Just as the hissing sound of the clay pot does not prove its defectiveness, in the same way, the slight effect which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* felt on seeing Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* is most certainly not a sign of defectiveness, and it does not affect his status in any way.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has undoubtedly explained a most beneficial and enlightening subject in a manner which was suited for a distinguished scholar like him. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us who are affiliated to him with a major share of his knowledge and sciences. This subject ought to

be published as a booklet on its own. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

THE MI'RĀJ

Since we mentioned the Miʿrāj [in our previous discussion], I feel I should explain to you the verse in which Allāh *taʿālā* Himself makes mention of the Miʿrāj. My explanation is in the light of what the exegetes said.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلاً مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِيْ بٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا ؕ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ.

Exalted is He who took His servant by night from the Sacred Masjid to the Aqsā Masjid - the precincts of which We have blessed – so that We may show him some signs of Our power. He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this verse. The correlation between this verse and the sūrah before it is that at the end of the previous sūrah Allāh *taʿālā* ordered Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remain patient, and not to grieve over the kufr and scheming nature of the unbelievers. Allāh *taʿālā* also mentions the virtue of those who have piety and Allāh-consciousness, and promises them His proximity. The last two verses of the previous sūrah read as follows:

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 1.

وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ. إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ.

Be patient, then. And your patience is possible only by Allāh's help. Do not grieve over them nor be distressed by their scheming. Surely Allāh is with those who are righteous and those who do virtuous deeds.[1]

Relating the incident of the Miʿrāj after these verses makes reference to the fact that the fruit of Rasūlullāh's patience and piety is that Allāh *taʿālā* blessed him with the Isrā' and Miʿrāj in this worldly life, conferred him with the honour of conversing with Him, and showed him His unique signs.

Bearing in mind that this incident is most unique and extraordinary, and displays Allāh's immense power, Allāh *taʿālā* commences the verse with the word "Sub-h̲āna". This word negates all defects and evils from Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, the unbelievers' rejection of the Miʿrāj and their considering it to be far-fetched is – so to say – a rejection of Allāh's absolute power and attributing weakness and defectiveness in Him. By bringing this word at the very beginning, Allāh *taʿālā* is teaching us that while the Miʿrāj is a most extraordinary and astounding event, it is certainly not far-fetched from Allāh's absolute power, and He is most definitely not incapable of it.

ʿAllāmah T̲ībī *rah̲imahullāh* says that the word "Sub-h̲āna" makes reference to the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* is totally and absolutely pure from all the defects and evils which Allāh's enemies attribute to Him. H̲ad̲rat T̲alh̲ah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates: "I asked

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[1] Sūrah an-Nah̲l, 16: 127-128.

Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam for an explanation of the word ‘Sub-<u>h</u>āna’ and he said:

تنزيه الله تعالى عن كل سوء

It refers to Allāh taʿālā absolving Himself from every type of evil.

Abul Qāsim Sulaymān An<u>s</u>ārī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in his commentary to the words: “who took His servant by night”: When Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* reached lofty and elevated heights, Allāh *taʿālā* sent revelation to him asking:

يا محمد، بم نشرفك

O Mu<u>h</u>ammad! How would you like Us to honour you?

Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

بنسبتي إليك بالعبودية

By attributing my servitude to You.

Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the words: “who took His servant by night”. Furthermore, Allāh *taʿālā* said: “His servant” and not “His beloved” in order to seal the door to extremism and fanaticism with regard to Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* So that Muslims may not become like the Christians who went to the extreme of claiming that <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* is the son of Allāh.

The words:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهِ

Make reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

The words:

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوْسٰى لِمِيْقَاتِنَا

When Mūsā came at Our appointed time.

So to say or to a certain extent, make reference to a Miʿrāj of H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*.

After pondering over the different styles of expression in both these verses, the difference in rank between Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* becomes quite clear. Allāh *taʿālā* attributed the act of taking Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to Himself, and made reference to the fact that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is "His servant". This demonstrates the special relationship which he had with Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, when Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*, He attributes his coming to Allāh *taʿālā* to him [and not to Himself. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* did not take or bring him, he came to Allāh *taʿālā*]. Furthermore, Allāh *taʿālā* mentions him by name [and not by referring to him as His servant].

The word *laylan* is in the indefinite case to show that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* travelled in small portion of the night from Masjid al-H̲arām to Masjid al-Aqs̲ā, from there to the seven heavens, and from there to wherever Allāh *taʿālā* willed. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went close to his Beloved and reached the level of observing the objective. Masjid al-Aqs̲ā refers to Bayt al-Maqdis. The word "Aqs̲ā" is intended to show how far it is because this word means "very far away". Masjid al-H̲arām to Masjid al-Aqs̲ā is a journey of 40 days. And according

to one narration, the distance from there to Sidratul Muntahā is a journey of 300 000 years.[1]

"The precincts of which We have blessed."

This is an attribute of Masjid al-Aqsā. In other words, We have placed Dīnī and worldly blessings around this masjid. The Dīnī blessing is that it has been the place of worship and the qiblah of all the past Prophets. It is also their resting place and the place at which the angels descend. Furthermore, many Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are buried here. The worldly blessing is that this area has rivers, many trees and a lot of produce.

The incident of Miʿrāj in brief took place as follows:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was lying down one night in the Kaʿbah when Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Mīkāʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* came to him and said: "Come with us." They seated him on the Burāq which was so fast that its feet would land at the place where its eyes fell. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was first taken to Masjid al-Aqsā in Syria. Allāh *taʿālā* assembled all the past Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* as a way of showing tribute to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. On reaching here, Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* called out the adhān. The rows of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were then arranged. There were seven rows in total with the Messengers taking up three rows. The angels joined them in the salāh. Everyone was standing in the rows waiting for the one who would lead them in salāh. Hadrat Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* held the hand of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and took him forward. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi*

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[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī.*

wa sallam led the salāh with all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām* and angels as his followers. He performed two rakʿats of salāh. He read Sūrah al-Kāfirūn in the first rakʿat and Sūrah al-Ikhlās in the second rakʿat.

لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا

So that We may show him some signs of Our power.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the above words as:

أي لنرفعه إلى السماء حتى يرى ما يرى من العجائب العظيمة

We took him from Masjid al-Harām to Masjid al-Aqsā in a most unique way so that We may raise him to the heavens in order to show him extraordinary and majestic creations.

The Ahādīth state that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* on the different levels of the heavens. He met Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* on the first heaven, Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Yahyā *ʿalayhis salām* on the second heaven, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* on the third heaven, Hadrat Idrīs *ʿalayhis salām* on the fourth heaven, Hadrat Hārūn *ʿalayhis salām* on the fifth heaven, Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* on the sixth heaven, and Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* on the seventh heaven. He also observed the scenes of Paradise and Hell and saw countless angels.

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ

He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.

There are two possibilities with regard to the pronoun "He". The more obvious explanation is that it refers to

Allāh *taʿālā*. Most exegetes are of this view and they say that this sentence is a proof for the Isrā' and Miʿrāj. It would therefore mean that Allāh *taʿālā* brought Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* close, honoured him and enabled him to observe the various scenes so that he may know that Allāh *taʿālā* is fully aware of his conditions and knows well that he is eligible for this high rank.

ʿAllāmah Ṯībī *rahimahullāh* says:

إنه هو السميع لأقوال ذلك العبد البصير بأفعاله بكونها مهذبة خالصة عن شوائب الهوى مقرونة بالصدق والصفا مستأهلة للقرب والزلفى.

Allāh taʿālā is listening to the words of His special servant and watching his actions – that they are cultured, pure from any taint of desires, accompanied with honesty and purity, and suited for the near and close position.

The other possibility is that the pronoun refers to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In such a case, it will mean:

السميع بكلامنا البصير لذاتنا

He listens to Our speech and he sees Us.

Allāh *taʿālā* is explaining to us that this servant to whom I conferred this honour is fully eligible for it because he listens to My orders and prohibitions, and practises accordingly. He is seeing because he looks at My creation with consideration and takes lessons and admonishments from them. Alternatively, it could mean: He observes and ponders over the signs which I showed him in the course of the Miʿrāj.

Reference to this is made elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغٰى. لَقَدْ رَاٰى مِنْ اٰيَاتِ رَبِّهِ الْكُبْرٰى

The sight neither went astray nor did it go beyond the limit. Without doubt, he saw some of the great signs of his Lord.[1]

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked at the things which he was ordered to look at; he did not shift his gaze from them. And he did not turn to look at other things until he was given the order to look at them. This is a proof of the high level of his self-control. Normally when a person is astounded at seeing extraordinary things, he does not look at what he is asked to look at, but he will stare at the things which he was not supposed to look at. In other words, such a person cannot control himself.

Ibn ʿAt̲īyyah *rah̲imahullāh* says that the words:

إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ

He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing.

Are a warning for the unbelievers in the sense that they rejected the incident of the Miʿrāj when Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informed them. This would mean that Allāh *taʿālā* is listening to whatever they are saying, and watching whatever they are doing. They will therefore be punished accordingly.

In the next verse Allāh *taʿālā* speaks about giving the Book to H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and then about two forms of corruption committed by the Banī Isrāʾīl. This resulted in the demolition and violation of Masjid al-Aqs̲ā. This is the original object of Allāh *taʿālā* but He first made reference to the Miʿrāj because the

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[1] Sūrah an-Najm, 53: 17-18.

blessed feet of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam are entering Masjid al-Aqsā. It is a prelude to the eternal inhabitancy of this masjid. In other words, through the blessings of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam this masjid will remain inhabited by the followers of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam until the day of Resurrection. Even today, the number of Auliyā' and pious servants who are in that vicinity cannot be seen anywhere else. Although the enemies have taken control of the area, Bayt al-Maqdis has always been in the hands of the Muslims and salāh with congregation is performed there. We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* that this continues until eternity.

Note: At present, the Jews are controlling it and are plotting to take full and absolute control of it. Muslims are suffering untold oppressions at their hands. There is a genuine need for duʿā'. May Allāh *taʿālā* make the efforts of the Jews unsuccessful. Āmīn. (compiler)

وَاٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى لِّبَنِيْ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُونِيْ وَكِيْلًا.

We gave to Mūsā the Book and We made it a guide for the Banī Isrāʾīl [saying]: "Do not assign anyone apart from Me as a protector."[1]

The exegetes says that this verse is conjunctively joined to the previous verse:

سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ أَسْرٰى بِعَبْدِهِ

Exalted is He who took His servant…

[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 2.

They say that the two are interconnected in the sense that the first verse makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. He was first taken to Bayt al-Maqdis, taken to the heavens, Allāh taʿālā showed him His signs, and conferred to him whatever He was to give him. The present verse makes reference to the Miʿrāj of Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām who was from among the senior Prophets ʿalayhimus salām of Allāh taʿālā. He was called to Mt. Tūr where he was given the Taurāh. If there could be any other similar incident after Rasūlullāh's incident of Miʿrāj, then it is this incident. This is why it is related here. Even though there is a major difference between the two.

In his commentary to this verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes: If you want, you can compare between the words "who took His servant" and "We gave to Mūsā", and the words "We made it a guide for the Banī Isrāʾīl" and "it guides to the path which is most upright". If you do this, you will realize the difference in rank between these two Books [the Qur'ān and the Taurāh] and those to whom these Books were revealed. Similarly, Allāh *taʿālā* attributed the act of taking Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to Himself and referred to him as "His servant". On the other hand, he referred to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* by name. Also, the Taurāh is described as a guide for the Banī Isrāʾīl while the Qur'ān is not specified for any particular group or nation; it is for the entire mankind.

أَلَّا تَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ دُونِيْ وَكِيْلًا

Do not assign anyone apart from Me as a protector.

In his commentary to the above words, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the word "wakīl" is applied to

a being to whom all affairs in their entirety are delegated. Obviously it can be none apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. He explains the word *wakīl* as:

ربًّا تكلون إليه أموركم غيري.

A Lord apart from Me to whom you delegate your matters.

This would mean: We said in the Taurāh that you must not make anyone apart from Me as a Lord in the sense that you delegate all your matters to him.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

ذُرِّيَّةَ مَنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ

O you who are the progeny of those whom We carried with Nūh.

Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: O you who are the progeny of those whom We carried with Nūh on the ship! Do not make any Lord apart from Me to whom you delegate your matters.

Allāh *taʿālā* then praises Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*:

إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَبْدًا شَكُوْرًا

Surely he was a grateful servant.

Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām* was a most grateful servant of Allāh *taʿālā*. It is stated that when he used to eat, he used to make this duʿā':

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَطْعَمَنِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَجَاعَنِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who fed me. He could have kept me hungry had He willed.

When he used to drink water, he used to make this duʿā’:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَسْقَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَظْمَأَنِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who gave me to drink. He could have kept me thirsty had He willed.

When he used to wear clothes, he used to make this duʿā’:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ كَسَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَعْرَانِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who clothed me. He could have kept me unclothed had He willed.

When he used to wear shoes, he used to make this duʿā’:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ حَذَانِيْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اَحْفَانِيْ.

All praise is due to Allāh who gave me shoes to wear. He could have left me barefooted had He willed.

When he used to relieve himself, he used to make this duʿā’:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَخْرَجَ عَنِّيْ اَذَاهُ فِيْ عَافِيَةٍ وَلَوْ شَاءَ حَبَسَهُ.

All praise is due to Allāh who removed the discomfort from my body in a comfortable manner. Had He willed, He could have held it back.

The correlation between the present verse and the one before it is that previously Allāh *taʿālā* said: Do not take a protector apart from Me, and do not ascribe any partner to Me.

H̲ad̲rat Nūh̲ *ʿalayhis salām* was a grateful servant, and no one can be a grateful servant until he is a

monotheist. He must consider all the favours of Allāh *taʿālā* as His grace and kindness. Since you [Banī Isrā'īl] are from the progeny of Hadrat Nūh *ʿalayhis salām*, you must follow his way as did your forefathers. Allāh *taʿālā* knows best.

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَقَضَيْنَآ إِلٰى بَنِيْ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ لَتُفْسِدُنَّ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَّتَيْنِ وَلَتَعْلُنَّ عُلُوًّا كَبِيْرًا.

We openly declared to the Banī Isrā'īl in the Book [saying]: "You will cause corruption in the land two times and you will commit great transgression."[1]

Imām Rāzī *rahimahullāh* explains the correlation of this verse with those before it as follows:

Allāh *taʿālā* first stated that He conferred a great favour to the Banī Isrā'īl by sending the Taurāh to them and making it a guide for them. Allāh *taʿālā* is now saying that they did not take guidance from the Taurāh. Instead, they caused corruption. The corruption is detailed in the present verse. Allāh *taʿālā* is saying: We had informed them and sent revelation to them stating that they will certainly cause corruption and commit transgression.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that the words "You will cause corruption in the land two times" is an answer to an omitted oath. It means, "By Allāh, you will certainly cause corruption…"

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 4.

فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ أُوْلٰهُمَا بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ عِبَادًا لَّنَآ أُولِيْ بَأْسٍ شَدِيْدٍ فَجَاسُوْا خِلٰلَ الدِّيَارِ ؕ وَكَانَ وَعْدًا مَّفْعُوْلًا.

Then when the first promise came, We sent to you Our servants endued with mighty aggression. They then spread within the cities. And it was a promise fulfilled.

(They will get into the houses. It is a promise which will certainly be fulfilled). In other words, it is an absolute decree of Allāh *taʿālā* which cannot be abrogated. The words:

بَعَثْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ

Mean:

أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ وَخَلَيْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ خَاذِلِيْنَ

We will empower them over you, and we will leave you and them in a state of forsakenness.

The exegetes have differing opinions with regard to who these people are. Imām Rāzī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says that there is no real purpose in trying to ascertain who they are. Instead, these incidents are related solely to demonstrate that when these people indulged in excessive acts of disobedience, Allāh *taʿālā* empowered such nations over them who killed and massacred them.

I say that this punishment was not imposed on them solely because of excessive sinning, but because they killed the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*; and the blasphemy of this is obvious. Imām Rāzī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says that the first act of corruption of the Banī Isrāʾīl is that they began vexing pride. Then they considered the unlawful to be lawful, they killed Prophets

ʿalayhimus salām and they shed innocent blood. Punishment therefore came to them, and unbelievers were imposed on unbelievers, because punishment does not befall the believers. The form which this punishment took is that the awe which the Mageans had for the Banī Isrā'īl was removed and Bukht Nas̱r was empowered over them. The latter massacred 40 000 readers of the Taurāh. H̱aḏrat Ibn ʿAbbās *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* relates that the armies of Bukht Nas̱r would get into the houses and search for people who may have escaped the massacre. They would then take the remaining people and keep them under most humiliating conditions.

Allāh *taʿālā* then appointed another king over them who attacked the people of Babylon, and he married a woman from the Banī Isrā'īl. She asked the king to return the remaining Banī Isrā'īl to Bayt al-Maqdis. He acceded to her request. Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* were sent to them after some time and their condition improved. The ʿulamā' say that the period of humiliation and degradation lasted for about 100 years and their wealth and honour returned to them. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَا لَكُمُ الْكَرَّةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَمْدَدْنٰكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ وَجَعَلْنٰكُمْ أَكْثَرَ نَفِيْرًا.

We then gave back to you the turn against them and strengthened you with wealth and offspring, and made you more numerous in troops.[1]

In other words, We will return to you your wealth and give you power over those who did whatever they did

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 6.

to you. This means that your enemies will be destroyed. We will help you with a lot of wealth so that it may be a recompense for the wealth which was stolen from you previously. We will also help you with offspring so that it will make up for your children who were imprisoned and killed.

The word *nafīr* refers to armies of men. What this means is that We will make your men in the majority. This is exactly what happened.

The Banī Isrā'īl were people of the Book and the offspring of Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. They bore the Book of Allāh *taʿālā*. But when they disobeyed and spread corruption, disregarded the Taurāh completely, committed unlawful actions, and went to the extent of massacring the righteous people and the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*; punishment from Allāh *taʿālā* descended upon them. The enemy was imposed upon them and they were disgraced and subjugated. They spent a considerable period of time in this way. Once they expressed remorse and repented, Allāh's grace – as promised – came back to them. They were given wealth, children and armies; and awe and fear was placed in the hearts of their enemies. At the same time, they were addressed thus:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

If you did good, you did good for your own selves. And if you did evil, you did it for your own selves.[1]

In other words, if you are obedient and do good actions, you will be doing them for your own benefit. Through the blessings of your obedience, Allāh *taʿālā*

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 7.

will open upon you the doors of blessings and prosperity.

وإن أسأتم بفعل المحرمات أسأتم إلى أنفسكم

If you do evil by committing prohibited actions, you will be wronging your own selves because Allāh *taʿālā* will open the doors of punishment and torment through the misfortune of those evil actions.

This verse makes reference to the fact that Allāh's mercy on them surpasses His wrath because when He spoke of His kindness to His servants, He mentioned it twice:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ

If you did good, you did good for your own selves.

But when He made reference to the evil of mankind, He mentioned it once:

وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا

And if you did evil, you did it for your own selves.

If Allāh's mercy did not surpass His wrath, Allāh *taʿālā* would not have expressed it in this way.

I say that the words:

إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ

If you did good, you did good for your own selves.

Could also make reference to the fact that if you do good actions, the greatest benefit will be that your carnal self will become good. It will gradually move from being a self which instructs evil to a self which reaches the point of tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā*, after

which it will be perfected. It will develop within itself the ability to do good. The fruits and blessings of this which will be experienced in the Hereafter is beyond imagination. Even in this world the person will enjoy a wholesome life and additional generosity from Allāh *taʿālā*. He will treat him in a manner which will result in people considering him to be great and honourable. Everyone will include him among the righteous.

On the other hand, the person who does evil actions – his carnal self will remain evil and it will continue prompting him towards evil actions. The person will be disgraced in this world and everyone will include him among the evildoers.

Allāh *taʿālā* then informs us of the second corruption of the Banī Isrāʾīl:

فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ الْآخِرَةِ لِيَسُوْءا وُجُوْهَكُمْ وَلِيَدْخُلُوْا الْمَسْجِدَ كَمَا دَخَلُوْهُ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّلِيُتَبِّرُوْا مَا عَلَوْا تَتْبِيْرًا.

Then when the second promise came, [We sent other servants] to sadden your faces and to break into the Masjid as they had broken into it the first time. And to destroy with utter destruction whatever they conquer.[1]

The exegetes say that their second corruption came when they transgressed a second time. This entailed the murder of H̲ad̲rat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* and H̲ad̲rat Yah̲yā *ʿalayhis salām*. Constantine, the Roman emperor, was empowered over them. The effects of sorrow, pain and grief were visible on the faces of the Banī Isrāʾīl. This is because in addition to their killing, degradation and other physical torments; they suffered spiritual torment in the sense that apart from

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 7.

entering their homes, their enemies entered their masājid and places of worship, desecrated and destroyed them.

عَسٰى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يَّرْحَمَكُمْ

It may well be that your Lord may have mercy on you.[1]

It is not far fetched for your Lord to have mercy for you. That is, when you repent and desist from sinning. If not:

وَإِنْ عُدْتُّمْ عُدْنَا

But if you do the same [sins], We will do the same [in punishment].[2]

In other words, if you return to corruption, We will return to punishing you.

We then punished you in this world again. This is because you committed evils once again by rejecting Muhammad Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and tried to murder him.

Allāh *taʿālā* punished them for it and empowered Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* over them. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had the Banū Qurayzah killed, expelled that Banū Nadīr, and imposed the jizyah on the remaining Jews. They were vanquished and overpowered to the extent that they had neither a country nor any authority.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the word "if" makes reference to the point that you ought not to go

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[1] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 8.

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, 17: 8.

back to your evil ways. But if you do, then remember that We too can go back to punishing you.

وَجَعَلْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ حَصِيْرًا

We have made Hell the prison of the unbelievers.

In other words, We made Hell such a prison for the unbelievers that they will not be able to escape from it.

One meaning of the word *h̲as̲īr* is a bed. In other words, just as a bed is laid out, these people will be laid out in the Hell-fire without being able to escape. It is stated in *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr* that the word *h̲as̲īr* refers to a prison from which there is no escape.

Imām Rāzī *rah̲imahullāh* says that this means that even if the punishment of this world is severe, a person can escape it. He will either die or escape in some way or the other. But the punishment of the Hereafter will encompass him completely from all sides. There will be no hope of escape. The nations which are mentioned here – their worldly punishment was what was related. That is, getting killed, attacked, invaded, humiliation, degradation, and so on. In the Hereafter they will have to face an even more powerful punishment which will encompass them from all sides and from which there will be no escape. May Allāh *taʿālā* protect us from it. Āmīn.

Allāh *taʿālā* then says:

إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا. وَأَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْآخِرَةِ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيْمًا.

This Qur’ān shows the way that is the straightest and it gives glad tidings to the believers who do good deeds that for them is a great reward. And those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that this verse is connected to the beginning of the sūrah wherein Allāh *taʿālā* says: “We gave to Mūsā the Book”. It makes mention of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* receiving a Book. The present verse makes mention of a Book which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was given. Undoubtedly, this Qur’ān is such a great Book which We gave to you that it guides to a path which is the straightest.

Imām Rāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* mentions three types of attributes of the Qur’ān:

1. It shows the way which is straightest. This was explained above.
2. It gives glad tidings of immense rewards for the believers who do good works. The first attribute of the Qur’ān points to the fact that it guides towards beliefs which are most correct and actions which are most righteous. It is now inevitable for the effect of this to manifest itself, and that effect is “a great reward”. After all, the straightest path has to result in the hugest profit and the greatest benefit.
3. “Those who do not believe in the Hereafter, We have prepared for them a painful punishment.” In other words, the Qur’ān teaches us that those who do not believe in the Hereafter have a most terrifying punishment in store for them. After all, just as correct beliefs and righteous

actions result in the greatest rewards, abandoning them have to result in the worst of punishments.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes further on:

قوله: إِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ أَقْوَمُ أي إن هذا القرآن يعرف أهله بنوره أقوم الطريق إلى الله تعالى وهو طريق الطاعة والإقتداء بمن أنزل عليه عليه الصلواة والسلام، فإنه لا طريق يوصل إلا ذلك، ولله در من قال:

وأنت باب الله أي إمرئ – اتاه من غيرك لا يدخل

The Qur'ān – through its light – is undoubtedly the straightest way of conveying people to Allāh taʿālā. It is through the path of obedience. It entails following the one on whom this Qur'ān was revealed, i.e. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. There is no other way which will convey a person to Allāh taʿālā. A poet beautifully says: You are the door of Allāh. Anyone who tries to enter by circumventing you will not be able to enter.

I originally intended speaking about the Miʿrāj of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, since the verses were interconnected and they contain several benefits and intricate points, I related to you their explanation in short. I hope the reader will benefit from them.

I had commenced with a couplet of Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh*. A discussion on the Miʿrāj came in-between and so my speech turned out to be quite long. I will now quote the remaining couplets and conclude.

> The person who has such a person as his leader will never be caught in disobedience.
>
> What kind of eulogy can I select in your praise! O Messenger of the universe! Peace and salutations to you.[1]

He says further on:

> Allāh *taʿālā* praised you and extolled your greatness. Your high status caused Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām* to kiss the ground.
>
> The lofty heavens are abashed by your status. When you were created, Ādam was still between water and soil.
>
> You are the foundation of existence from the beginning. Anyone who came into existence is a branch of you.
>
> I cannot think of what I can say in your praise because you are far beyond whatever I will say.
>
> The pride of *Laulāka* (were it not for you) is enough to demonstrate your rank and status. The titles of Ṯā Hā and Yā Sīn are enough as your titles.
>
> How can a mentally-defective Saʿdī praise you!? O Prophet! Peace and salutations to you.[2]

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[1] *Būstān*, p. 5.

[2] *Būstān*, p. 6.

فالحمد لله تعالى أولا وآخرا وظاهرا وباطنا ما دامت السموات والأرضين، والصلوة والسلام على خاتم النبيين. وسيد الأنبياء والمرسلين. وعلى اٰله الطيبين، وأصحابه الطاهرين، وما توفيقي إلا بالله.

THE CORRECT TEACHING AND TRAINING METHODOLOGY

At present I would like to speak about teaching and training according to the Sunnat method. As long as the correct methodology is not adopted, the work of reformation and rectification cannot be realized. Even if today the work is done according to the correct methodology, it will be achieved and people will turn to Dīn. They will accept divine injunctions and teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with enthusiasm. The correct methodology is the one which Allāh *taʿālā* taught to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and which he adopted in his teachings. It is the same methodology which was then chosen by the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, Tābiʿīn, Imāms and pious predecessors.

Ease and simplicity in training

Easiness is the most essential ingredient when training and teaching. It must be taken into consideration in every situation. In his *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*, Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* has devoted a chapter titled *Bāb at-Taysīr* (the chapter on easiness). He quotes the following verse of the Qur'ān:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوْا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ.

It is the mercy of Allāh alone that they found you to be soft-hearted. Had you been harsh, hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you.[1]

We learn from this that the special quality of soft-heartedness which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had was by virtue of Allāh's mercy. Had Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* been stern and hard-hearted in his teaching methodology, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* would have found it difficult to learn rules and regulations from him, and from deriving blessings from him.

By making Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* soft-hearted and kind, Allāh *taʿālā* willed ease for us. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself says in this regard:

يُرِيْدُ اللهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيْدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ

Allāh wills ease for you and He does not will difficulty for you.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

اَلدِّيْنُ يُسْرٌ

Religion is easy.

He also said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُمْ مُيَسِّرِيْنَ وَلَمْ تُبْعَثُوْا مُعَسِّرِيْنَ

You have been sent to provide ease and not to make things difficult.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 159.

[2] *Fayd al-Qadīr*, vol. 2, p. 573.

When Allāh *taʿālā* Himself willed ease, sent an easy religion, and appointed a Prophet who is a mercy to the worlds; we see Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taking due consideration of ease in every matter and ordered it to his followers especially in the field of education and training. After all this, how can a person ever not choose this methodology? Anyone who intends teaching Dīn will have to adopt ease and soft-heartedness. Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* went into much details on this subject and went into a detailed discussion on the causes for ease and providing ease. He says that among these causes is for a person to make duʿā' for his people that Allāh *taʿālā* perfects them, cultures them and reforms them.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful point! Those who are active in the field of propagation and rectification must turn to Allāh *taʿālā*. Only if Allāh *taʿālā* rectifies and reforms them will it be achieved. If not, the people will remain uncultured.

He writes further on:

ومنها أن لا يشرع لهم ما فيه مشقة الأشياء فشيئا، وهو قول عائشة رضي الله عنها إنما أنزل أول ما نزل منه سور من المفصل فيها ذكر الجنة والنار، حتى إذا ثاب الناس إلى الإسلام، نزل الحلال والحرام. ولو نزل أول شيء لا تشربوا الخمر لقالوا لا ندعُ الخمر أبدا، ولو نزل لا تَزِنُوا، لقالوا لا ندع الزنا أبدا.[1]

Among the ways of providing ease is for a person to abstain from commencing with things which will cause

[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ١، ص ١١٢.

difficulty. Instead, these must be introduced gradually. Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah radiyallāhu ʿanhā said that the first sūrahs of the Qur'ān to be revealed were the mufassal sūrahs in which Paradise and Hell were discussed. When people began turning to Islam, verses on the lawful and unlawful were revealed. If this injunction was revealed at the very beginning: "Do not consume alcohol", (people would not have accepted) and they would have said: "We cannot give up alcohol." Similarly, if they were told: "Do not commit adultery", they would have said: "We can never abstain from adultery."

We learn from this that the first thing to be discussed to the laity is Paradise and Hell, whereby they develop a yearning for Paradise and a dread for Hell. Discussions on Paradise and Hell are the most effective for changing conditions. We cannot bring the Muslims onto the path in any other way. This is why verses dealing with Paradise and Hell were revealed first. And Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* chose them for his propagation. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and Tābiʿīn adopted the same methodology. The conditions of peoples in every era changed through descriptions of Paradise and Hell. The theme which was effective in the past will be just as effective today. It cannot be replaced by anything else. If a person develops the slightest concern for the Hereafter, it will not allow him to remain free. A poet says:

> Even if you shackle me in 200 chains, I will break them. Yes, unless you imprison me with the hair-lock of my beloved.

In fact, reminders about the Hereafter cause a person to disregard this world and whatever it contains. And it will uproot everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* from

the heart. Verses dealing with Paradise and Hell do not allow many people to sleep peacefully.

There was a saint who did not sleep the entire night. His wife said to him: “At least sleep for a little while.” He replied: “This verse is not allowing me to sleep:

يَا اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا قُوْا اَنْفُسَكُمْ وَاَهْلِيْكُمْ نَارًا وَّقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ.

O believers! Save yourselves and your house people from the fire whose fuel is humans and stones.[1]

Those who are teaching Dīn must adopt a methodology which causes Dīn to become beloved in the eyes of people, and the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* settles in their hearts. It is difficult to act on the injunctions without love. Once love enters the heart, everything becomes easy.

> Love will itself teach you the etiquette of love. But you should at least develop some inclination towards it.

It is the same love which will turn the bitterness of actions into sweetness.

Once the love of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* settles in the hearts of people, they become conscious of the Hereafter, their īmān is strengthened, they are desirous of good actions, abhor evil actions; you can then present injunctions and actions to them. However, all this requires intense pondering, perfect understanding and insight. Therefore, before delivering a talk, ponder over what is necessary to

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[1] Sūrah at-Tahrīm, 66: 6.

speak, and what should be avoided. In what situations it may be said and in what situations it must be avoided. To whom it must be said and to whom it must not. This is because sometimes even the truth becomes a source of tribulation in certain situations and with certain people. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* used to say:

حَدِّثُوا النَّاسَ بِمَا يَعْرِفُوْنَ، أَتُرِيْدُوْنَ أَنْ يُكَذَّبَ اللهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ.

Speak to people about things which they can understand. Do you want Allāh and His Messenger to be rejected?

We learn from this that it is necessary to take the addressees into consideration, and to speak according to their level of understanding. We also learn that it is not the objective to propagate and proliferate every branch of knowledge even if it is the truth. The author of *Muwāfaqāt* makes a very pertinent point in this regard. I am quoting it below:

ومن هنا يعلم أنه ليس كل ما يعلم مما هو حق يطلب نشره، وإن كان من علم الشريعة ومما يفيد علما بالأحكام، بل ذلك ينقسم.

فمنه ما هو مطلوب النشر وهو غالب علم الشريعة، ومنه ما لا يطلب نشره باطلاق أو لا يطلب نشره بالنسبة إلى حال أو وقت أو شخص.[1]

Every truth which is known does not need to be propagated even if it is knowledge of the Sharīʿah which provides knowledge of the injunctions. Rather, it is of different categories.

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٨٩.

One category is which has to be propagated and proliferated, and this applies to the major portion of knowledge of the Sharīʿah. Another is which is not to be propagated at all. Yet another is the one which is not to be propagated in certain situations, times or with respect to certain persons (while it needs to be propagated in other situations, times and persons).

The author then says further on:

ومنه أن لا يذكر للمبتدي من العلم ما هو حظ المنتهي، بل يربي بصغار العلم قبل كباره. وقد فرض العلماء مسائل مما لا يجوز الفتيا بها وإن كانت صحيحة في نظر الفقه.[1]

Another category is the one which must not be taught to a novice but to an expert. The novice must first be taught minor things before being taught the major things. The scholars have laid down many rules and regulations which cannot be issued as fatāwā even though they may be correct in the light of jurisprudence.

Similarly, when the masses pose questions about the underlying reasons and rationale behind juridical rulings, their questions must not be answered even if the reasons, rationale and wisdoms for those rulings are found.[2] We find Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* severely reprimanding a woman who asked why a menstruating woman has to make up for her missed fasts but not her missed salāhs? Hadrat ʿĀ'ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* asked her:

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٩٠.

[2] This was also the practice of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh.*

أحروريّة أنت؟

Are you a H̲arūrīyyah?

In the same manner, H̲ad̲rat ʽUmar ibn al-Khat̲t̲āb *rad̲iyallāhu ʽanhu* beat, reprimanded and chased S̲ibbīgh who used to ask many questions about sciences of the Qur'ān which were not related to actions.

Certain correct things must not be mentioned when corruption is feared

Sometimes, although correct knowledge is the truth, it becomes a cause of tribulation. Apart from the above-quoted proofs, there are several other proofs which support the statement that every knowledge does not have to be proliferated and propagated, even if it is the truth. H̲ad̲rat Imām Mālik *rah̲imahullāh* said that he has several Ah̲ādīth and knows certain facts which he never spoke about and never explained. He considered it makrūh (reprehensible) to speak about knowledge under which there is no action. He used to say: Our predecessors also considered it makrūh to speak about knowledge under which there is no action.

ʽAllāmah Shāt̲ibī *rah̲imahullāh* notes a principle in this regard.

وضابطه أنك تعرض مسألتك على الشريعة، فإن صحت في ميزانها فانظر في مآلها بالنسبة إلى حال الزمان وأهله، فإن لم يؤد ذكرها إلى مفسدة فأعرضها في ذهنك على العقول، فإن قبلتها فلك أن تتكلم فيها إما على العموم إن كانت مما تقبلها العقول على العموم، وإما على الخصوص إن كانت غير لائقة بالعموم، وإن لم يكن لمسألتك هذا

المساغ فالسكوت عنها هو الجاري على وفق المصلحة الشرعية والعقلية.[1]

Before you can present an issue to people, present it to the Sharīʿah. If it is correct in the scale of the Sharīʿah, ponder over its outcome and consequence with relation to conditions of the time and the people. If mentioning it is not going to be a tribulation, you may present it in your mind to people of intelligence. (In other words, imagine that intelligent people are sitting before you and you are presenting this issue to them. Will they accept it or reject it?) If they all accept it, you may present it to the public (but if people in general will not accept it) and only specific people will accept it, then present it in a special assembly. If your issue has no room for this also (i.e. neither the laity nor the special people will accept it), then the Sharʿī and rational thing to do will be to remain silent.

We learn from the above that if we want to speak about an issue or ruling, we will first have to ponder over its compliance with the Sharīʿat. We must then assess the condition in which we are living and the condition of the people, and think whether what we want to speak about is going to cause a tribulation. If it is, then never ever speak about it. If there is no fear of tribulation, we will have to think whether the intelligent people of the time – in general or specific people – will accept it. If no intelligent person will accept it, do not mention it. If only a specific group can understand it and will accept it, then mention it to that group alone. If all the intelligent people will

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٤، ص ١٩١.

accept it, you may present it to them in a general assembly.

As long as this principle is not applied and these limits and restrictions are not abided, and you do not speak in line with the prevailing conditions and the condition of people, nothing will be of any benefit.

It is essential to consider training

The methodology of the seniors was to take full consideration of training and differences in ranks. A true reformer and teacher is one who commences teaching the basics first. He teaches the fundamentals before delving into intricate matters. When it comes to rectification, it is necessary to first set right the external self of people. He must first teach them purity, s̲alāh, zakāh and other acts of worship. He may then explore internal spiritual reformation.

The need is to teach the basics and fundamentals to people. If we were to start relating to you the lives, sincerity, striving and virtues of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum*, and telling you how great our forefathers were, it will not be so beneficial. People will listen to these stories and enjoy them as well, but rectification will not be achieved. The method of rectification to start with the absolute basics and to explain matters which we have to encounter and experience on a daily basis. If these are explained, there is hope of benefit. We notice that people nowadays do not even know the rules and regulations of wud̲ū', s̲alāh, purity, etc. Yet no attention is given to these things. Instead, such issues are discussed which are causing new problems and tribulations. What I am explaining to you at present is that it is not an easy task to teach and train people. It is a major responsibility.

Before teaching the Qur’ān, the *Qā’idah Baghdādī* is taught. If a person does not know how to read the individual letters and joined letters, he will not be able to read the Qur’ān. Once he learns to identify and recognize the individual and joined letters, he will be able to develop fluency in his Qur’ān reading. In the same way, before studying tafsīr, Hadīth, jurisprudence and other higher sciences; it is necessary for a person to study Arabic grammar, etymology, language, vocabulary, literature and so on. If he does not know these fundamentals, he cannot understand tafsīr, Hadīth, etc.

In the same way, rectification and training have to commence with the basics. A novice is then gradually conveyed to the higher levels. It is certainly difficult to adopt this methodology of gradual and incremental teaching, but it will prove to be more beneficial. The other method is to quickly relate to the public as many things as possible. They will certainly enjoy it but it will not have the required benefit. This is why when addressing people, we have to first see if it is in line with the condition of the addressees so that they can benefit from it. If a scholar or lecturer speaks according to his level and rank without giving consideration to the level and condition of the people, how will they benefit? Worse than that, he may say something which results in tribulation; and instead of rectification, it may cause corruption. A poet rightly said:

> That nation is most oppressive which shut its eyes and said things which caused the entire world to be set on fire.

In other words, it put people into tribulation.

The Muslim home ought to be the first madrasah

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* states in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* that during the eras of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* and the Tābiʿūn, every Muslim home was a madrasah. The primary education of children was given by parents within the home. This practice has left us now, although there are a few exceptions. The general trend is that matters which were supposed to be taught at home are now being taught by teachers in the madāris. In fact, even the mashā'ikh have to teach these things now.

After observing your conditions, I too started speaking on these subjects. You are probably astonished at the fact that themes of this nature are being discussed in a tasawwuf assembly. You may continue being astonished; I am not bothered. Whether you pay heed or not, and whether you realize or not. I consider these subjects to be essential; this is why I am speaking about them. I believe they are exactly in line with the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If the Qur'ān and Hadīth speaks about these things, and the ʿulamā' have delved into these topics, why should we not speak about them?

External purity is essential

Internal and spiritual purity – also known as tasawwuf – cannot be acquired until and unless external purity is acquired. Furthermore, external purity has an effect on internal purity as well. It is most sad that you do not even know these things. This is why I say that when there is a need to teach the

basics, it cannot be achieved by delivering these talks for 2-3 days. Time will have to be devoted for this and the teaching will have to continue for a long period of time. The sequence for doing this is that you must initiate the work from your house and from your own locality. Work hard and strive in this regard, and you will find it to be productive. This is the method which is prescribed for the proliferation of Dīn. This is how people used to teach in the past. Even the women were taught knowledge and a Dīnī interest was created in them.

The following incident is recorded in the books: Some women gave testimony before a judge. One of the women commenced but forgot some part of her speech. Another woman reminded her what it was. The judge stopped her and asked: "Why are you telling her?" The woman replied by saying that the Qur'ān contains this order:

فَتُذَكِّرَ اِحْدٰهُمَا الْاُخْرٰى

In other words, the testimony of two women equals the testimony of one man because a woman is defective in her intelligence. She may err. The second woman can then remind her. The judge fell silent when he heard her reply. That was how sharp the women were in those days.

Shaykh Abū Bakr ibn Mas'ūd ibn Ahmad Kāsānī *rahimahullāh* is the author of *al-Badā'i' wa as-Sanā'i'*. When he presented this work to his shaykh, Shaykh 'Alā' ad-Dīn Samarqandī *rahimahullāh*, the latter was so overjoyed that he gave his daughter, Fātimah, in marriage to him. This, notwithstanding the fact that she was receiving proposals from powerful rulers and sultans. Shaykh Samarqandī *rahimahullāh* refused those proposals. Subsequently, when any fatwā was

issued from that house, it contained the signatures of three people: Shaykh ʿAlā' ad-Dīn Samarqandī [the father of the woman], Shaykh Abū Bakr [the husband of the woman], and the woman herself [Fāṯimah]. Only then was the fatwā considered to be authentic and reliable.

I related these incidents to you to demonstrate to you that there was a time when women were highly educated and proficient. I am relating to you incidents of past peoples and you are thoroughly enjoying listening to them. You are probably considering this to be in praise of your selves. You may be thinking to yourself: Just look at how great our women were! Of what benefit is it in saying this? It is actually a reprimand against you and proves your unworthiness because the women of those days were so intelligent, possessed so much of knowledge and practice which the men of today do not possess. We all have to be ashamed.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the methodology of teaching and training in a most clear manner. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to understand this methodology and to adopt it. Āmīn. (compiler)

YOU ARE THE BEST OF NATIONS

The book *Zād al-Maʿād* (of ʿAllāmah Ibn Qayyim *rahimahullāh*) really appealed to me. Whichever topic the author delved into, he wrote exceptionally well on it. In the introduction to his book, after praising Allāh *taʿālā* and sending salutations to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he commences by saying that Allāh *taʿālā* alone is the Creator and the possessor of absolute will. In other words, He alone is the Creator of everything. And whatever He created, He exercises His choice, selection and right over it.

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ

Your Lord creates whatever He wills and chooses whomever He likes.[1]

He says thereafter that if you observe the creations of Allāh *taʿālā* and His choice and selection, you will find glaring proofs of Allāh's divinity. Moreover, the conditions and situations which He apportioned to whichever of His creations, they bear testimony to His Oneness, absolute knowledge, wisdom and power. After observing these things, a person concludes that Allāh *taʿālā* is undoubtedly One, and He has no partner. In other words, there is no one who can create as He does, who can join in His creation, select and choose as He does, partner Him in this regard, plan and regulate as He does, or partner Him in this regard. This selection, regulation and specification which is witnessed in this world is a major sign of

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[1] Sūrah al-Qasas, 28: 68.

Allāh's divinity. It is also one of the greatest testimonies to His oneness, His perfect attributes and the truthfulness of His Messengers. Some of these will be explained here so that you will be able to gauge all that is apart from Him.

Allāh *taʿālā* created seven heavens and selected the uppermost one. He made it the abode for His angels, and selected it for His Throne, His Kursī and His proximity. And He made it an abode for whichever of His creations He willed. Based on these facts, the uppermost heaven enjoys superiority and virtue over the other heavens. Its close proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is sufficient to demonstrate its superiority. For this heaven to enjoy this superiority and speciality – although it is elementally the same as the other heavens – is a most clear proof of Allāh's absolute power and wisdom, and that He creates as He wills and gives special preference to whomever and whatever He wills.

The same can be said of the superiority which is enjoyed by Jannatul Firdaus over the other jannats. He made His Throne the roof for Paradise. According to some narrations, Allāh *taʿālā* planted its seedlings with His own hands, and selected and reserved them for His special servants.

Among the selections of Allāh *taʿālā* is that He selected certain angels from among His many angels. For example, Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām*, Mīkā'īl *ʿalayhis salām*, Isrāfīl *ʿalayhis salām* who are superior to all other angels. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to say: "O Allāh! O You who are the Lord of Jibra'īl, Mīkā'īl and Isrāfīl. The Lord of the earths and the heavens. The knower of the unseen and the seen. The one who passes decision in matters which people

differ. Guide me to what is correct. Surely You alone guide to the straight path whomever You will."

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentioned only these three angels because they enjoyed a special status. Also, they were from the selected angels and they enjoyed special proximity with Allāh *taʿālā*. There are many other angels in the heavens, yet Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* took the names of these three. Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* used to bring down revelation – that revelation which is a means for life in the hearts and souls. Hadrat Mīkā'īl *ʿalayhis salām* is in charge of the rains – rains which are the causes of the survival of the earth, animals and plants. Hadrat Isrāfīl *ʿalayhis salām* is in charge of the trumpet. When he blows it, Allāh *taʿālā* will permit the dead to come to life and remove them from their graves.

Included in the special selection of Allāh *taʿālā* is the selection of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* from the entire progeny of Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām*. These number about 124 000. From them 313 were selected for messenger-ship as gauged from the narration of Hadrat Abū Dharr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* which is quoted by Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and Ibn Hibbān *rahimahullāh*. From the Messengers, five are known as *ulu al-ʿazm* (those endowed with firmness and determination). Reference is made to them in Sūrah al-Ahzāb and Sūrah ash-Shūrā.

وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ.

We took from the Prophets their covenant and from you, from Nūh, Ibrāhīm Mūsā and ʿĪsā, the son of Maryam. We took a firm covenant from them.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah ash-Shūrā:

شَرَعَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا وَصّٰى بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّالَّذِيْ اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهٖ اِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسٰى اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الدِّيْنَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِيْهِ.

He has placed a path for you in the religion - the very same path towards which He had ordered Nūh, and the order of which We sent to you, and the path towards which We had ordered Ibrāhīm, Mūsā and ʿĪsā - uphold the religion and do not cause divisions therein.[2]

From these five, two were conferred with a very special and deep friendship, viz. Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Also in the special selection of Allāh *taʿālā* is His selection of the progeny of Ismāʿīl *ʿalayhis salām*, from them the Banū Kinānah which was a branch of the Khuzaymah, and from the Banū Kinānah the Quraysh were chosen. From the Quraysh, the Banū Hāshim tribe was given a special status, and from it, the chief of the human race, the pride of the Prophets and Messengers, and the leader of past and future generations – Hadrat Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was chosen.

Another example of Allāh's special selection is that He gave superiority to the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* of

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[1] Sūrah al-Ahzāb, 33: 7.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 13.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* over all the people of the world. From them, the early pioneers (*as-sābiqīn al-awwalīn)* were selected. Then it was those who took part in the Battle of Badr and then those who were present at Bayʿah ar-Ridwān. The most perfect one in Dīn was chosen for all of them. The one who was most superior as regards the Sharīʿat and who surpassed all in noble character was selected.

The ummat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was given superiority over all other nations. The *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and other books relate that Hadrat Nahr ibn Hakīm ibn Muʿāwiyah ibn Jundah relates from his father who relates from his father that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: From among the nations, you are the one which is to complete the number seventy. And you are the best and noblest of them.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and ʿAlī ibn al-Madīnī *rahimahullāh* say that this narration of Nahr ibn Hakīm is authentic. The effect of Allāh's selection is clearly seen in the actions, character, tauhīd, ranks in Paradise, position on the day of Resurrection, etc. of this ummat. This ummat will be separated from all the other nations and made to stand on a hill. It will distinguish itself over the other nations in its loftiness.

Tirmidhī Sharīf relates from Hadrat Buraydah ibn al-Hasīb Aslamī that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: The inhabitants of Paradise will comprise of 120 rows, of which 80 rows will be of this ummat. The remaining 40 rows will belong to the other nations. Imām Tirmidhī classifies this narration as a sound Hadīth.

Sahīh Bukhārī contains a Hadīth of Hadrat Abū Saʿīd Khudrī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I take an oath in the name of

the Being in whose control is my life, I hope that you people will make up half the inhabitants of Paradise." Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam also prayed for a larger number. We could correlate the two narrations by saying that the latter is more authentic. Or, when Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam expressed the desire that his ummat should make up half of the people of Paradise, Allāh taʿālā informed him that they will make up 80 out of the 120 rows of people. There is therefore no contradiction between the two. Allāh taʿālā knows best.

The ummat of Rasūlullāh is conferred with knowledge and forbearance

From among the points of superiority and virtue which this ummat enjoys, one is that Allāh *taʿālā* blessed it with knowledge and forbearance which was not given to such an extent to other nations. The *Musnad* of Bazzār and others relate from H̲ad̲rat Abū ad-Dardā' *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* who said: I heard Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saying: Allāh *taʿālā* said to ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*: "I am going to create a nation after you which will praise and thank Me when favourable conditions come to it. When it experiences unfavourable conditions, it will exercise patience and hope for reward for it." H̲ad̲rat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: "How will they be able to achieve all this without knowledge and forbearance?" Allāh *taʿālā* said: "I will give them a share of My knowledge and forbearance."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the virtue and honour which have been conferred to this ummat! It is even given the title of "the best of nations". Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللهِ.

You are the best of all nations which has been sent into the world - you enjoin good and forbid evil, and you believe in Allāh.[1]

In this verse, Allāh *taʿālā* says you were the best of nations. In other words, this was in your destiny and you were destined to become the best of nations. If the ummat is the best of nations, it is inevitable that the Messenger has to be the best of Messengers, its Dīn to be the best of all religions, its Sharīʿat to be the best of all, its Book to be the best of all Books, and its morals and actions to be the best.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent conclusion Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has drawn!

Further on Allāh *taʿālā* says "which has been sent for the people". You enjoin good and forbid evil. This shows that this attribute is from among the special attributes of this ummat and it is its hallmark.

The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

وقيل أن المراد كنتم في علم الله تعالى أو في اللوح المحفوظ، أو فيما بين الأمم، أي في علمهم كذلك أخرجت أي أظهرت.[٢]

One view is that "you are the best of nations" means that you are the best of nations in Allāh's knowledge or in the Preserved Tablet. Or you are the best nation

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 110.

[2] روح المعاني، ج ٤، ص ٢٥ز

according to all nations. In other words, they too know that you are the best. You have been appointed, i.e. brought into the open.

Allāh *taʿālā* – in His knowledge – had predestined for this nation to be the best. He therefore appointed it in this world to prove it. This nation will therefore carry out the work for which it was appointed until the day of Resurrection. In every era it will certainly have some people who will be practising on this Dīn. This will be the proof that they are perfect. The will encourage others to do the same. They will guide and steer people towards the straight path. This will be the proof that they are perfecting others. In short, the honour and virtue of this ummat lies in enjoining good and forbidding evil. As long as this quality is found in it, it will be the best. A group will continue enjoining good and forbidding evil until the day of Resurrection.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – include us in such a group, and enable us to support and help it. Āmīn. (compiler)

TWO ATTRIBUTES OF THE ONE INVITING TO ALLĀH

If an ʿālim takes up the work of rectifying and training for the wellness of the Muslims, and presents the correct teachings of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to them, they will most certainly pay heed. They will surely listen because they are, after all, Muslims. However, he must bear in mind that he is not referred to as being harsh, nor does he treat them harshly.

This is why you see that I am very soft. Harshness spoils the work. There was a Maulānā who accompanied me. When he returned home, he wrote to me thus: "When we were in ʿAlīgarh, Hadrat was most humble, yet everyone was over-awed by Hadrat." I replied: "This is solely by Allāh's grace."

Allāh *taʿālā* addressed Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and Hadrat Hārūn *ʿalayhis salām* as follows:

اَنْتُمَا وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغَالِبُوْنَ

You two and whoever follows you will remain dominant.

It is therefore Allāh's grace that He casts awe in the hearts of the people. Even if one person goes to a place, he will start conveying benefit to the people. We do not need large numbers of people to convey benefit. If there is just one person who understands the work well, he will be of benefit to the people. The path for others will be opened. Obviously, if a person goes with a worldly motive, there will be no benefit.

When the pre-Islamic Arabs were out at sea and the ship was in danger of sinking, they used to beseech Allāh *taʿālā*. Once they were saved, they would return to their idol-worship.

If a person does the work according to the principles and with sincerity, then even if he is a bit harsh, people will tolerate it. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* laid down two conditions for a person who is in the company of people. One is that a person must have no monetary motive from people. The other is that he must have sound character and mannerisms when interacting with them. He writes thereafter that if Allāh *taʿālā* decrees, He will enable the person to receive [material things] from the very same people. Why, then, should you include yourself among covetous people. When a person severs all hopes from people, Allāh *taʿālā* casts the thought in their hearts to help him. Hadrat Maulānā used to say that when a non-Muslim gives me anything, I accept it because I think to myself that I have no dealing or interaction with him. So if he is giving me something, it is really Allāh *taʿālā* who is causing him to give it to me.

Further on Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes that if you have no greed towards people and you possess sound character, and they still oppose you, then you must conclude that they are wretched souls; you must not have any hopes in them.

وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْآ أَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ

The wrongdoers shall soon learn by what kind of turning they will turn.[1]

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā', 26: 227.

I sent a message to one Maulānā Sāhib via a person. The message was: I undertake the rectification of people in total conformity with the Sunnat. I do not flatter or cajole anyone in the least. I do not overlook anything in matters related to rectification. Together with this, I am extremely lenient and easy-going in my interaction. I refrain totally from harshness. This is after all the Sunnat way. If I happen to say something harsh to a person for the sake of his reformation, then I treat him with kindness and affection the next time.

Note: This was certainly Hadrat's practice, and this is how he interacted with everyone. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us who are his associates to do the same. Āmīn. (compiler)

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* became angry at a Sahābī on one occasion. After a while, the person got up from the assembly and left. He must not have gone very far when someone sent some milk as a gift to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He immediately called for the Sahābī and gave him the milk to drink. This was the level of mercy and kindness of the mercy to the worlds *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and this is the method of rectification which is in line with the Sunnat.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to follow the Sunnat in this regard. Āmīn. (compiler)

After I sent my message to that Maulānā Sāhib, the latter replied: "Hadrat is absolutely correct. It is due to Hadrat's emulation of the Sunnat and his extreme leniency and soft-heartedness that people in large numbers are attracted to Hadrat."

I also asked that Maulānā Sāhib: "Do you think I will be able to do any work in the field of spiritual

rectification? Do you have any hopes in this regard?”[1] He replied: “Hadrat has already done a lot of work and is still doing a lot. Inshā Allāh, Hadrat will do much more in the future as well. Hadrat is doing purely Dīnī work. As regards Hadrat’s work, I can say that I present myself in Hadrat’s service, but sometimes I do not get the opportunity. Despite this, I find it has a great effect on me. I find my internal condition changing. What then can be said about the condition of those who are always in Hadrat’s service, and are acquiring Hadrat’s noble words, blessings and effulgence by night and day!? What great spiritual progress they must be making! Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.”

Note: Māshā Allāh, the Maulānā Sāhib gave a most appropriate reply to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat’s question. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire Hadrat’s associates to rectify their spiritual condition as best as possible. Āmīn. (compiler)

[1] We learn from this that a question of this nature can be posed to one’s special and close associates. (compiler)

ETIQUETTE TO BE OBSERVED IN AN INVITATION TO A MEAL

The person who extends an invitation to a meal must have the following objectives in mind:

ولتسنن بسنة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في إطعام الطعام.

He is feeding people in emulation of the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

اشتمالة قلوب الإخوان.

To incline the hearts of his fellow brothers through the meal.

إدخال السرور على قلوب المؤمنين بسبب من الإسباب.

To bring joy to the hearts of the believers.

From the second two objectives we learn that feeding is one of the important means of reconciling hearts. We can also conclude from the above that other intentions are neither correct nor valid.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَّكُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوْا ج إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ

Eat and drink but do not spend extravagantly. He is not pleased with those who spend extravagantly.[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 31.

If Allāh *taʿālā* prohibited extravagance in one's own wealth as regards eating and drinking, it will be prohibited to be extravagant in the wealth of others. The administrators of religious institutes must be very particular in this regard. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Additional etiquette

Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes:

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* noted some points which, if considered, an invitation will be in line with the Sunnat and Sharīʿat. He quoted these from *Ihyā' al-ʿUlūm* of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*. We are now quoting a few more points to complete the benefit of this topic.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that there are many narrations on the virtues of hospitality and feeding people. We will mention the etiquette only. Some of these relate to the inviter and others to the invited.

1. The inviter must make an effort to invite pious and righteous people, and not flagrant sinners. A person had invited Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He then made this duʿā' for the person:

أكل طعامك الأبرار

May righteous people eat your food.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* also said:

لا تأكل إلا طعام تقي، ولا يأكل طعامك إلا تقي

When you eat, ensure you eat the food of a pious person. And when you feed, ensure you feed a pious person.

Explanation: The instruction to invite pious people does not mean that it is prohibited to invite flagrant sinners and unbelievers. What it means is that the objective of an invitation must be the pious and righteous people. Others can also join in.

The ʿulamāʾ state that just as we are ordered to be hospitable to our guests, so is the order with our neighbours. This bond with the neighbour means that we may invite a neighbour just as we can accept his invitation. He is a neighbour just as we are his neighbour. Muslims are more eligible to adopt sound character and noble mannerisms than others.

The following is stated in *al-Fatāwā al-Hindīyyah*:

وفي التفاريق لا بأس بأن يضيف كافرا لقرابةٍ أو لحاجةٍ

There is no harm in hosting an unbeliever on the basis of kinship or due to some need.

Fulfilling the rights of the neighbour is an order of the Sharīʿat.

2. The inviter must also invite poor people. He must not invite wealthy and affluent people only. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that the worst meal is the walīmah to which only the wealthy are invited.

There are a few other etiquette which an inviter must observe. For example:

1. He must not deprive his close relatives from the invitation. Inviting outsiders while leaving out close relatives entails severing family ties and will cause them to become distant.
2. Observe a sequence for friends and associates. In other words, preference should be given to older friends first. Inviting some of them and

leaving out others will result in the latter becoming distant from you. It is necessary to avoid such a situation. The way to do this is to invite everyone. If this is not possible due to the number becoming too large, extend several invitations over a period of time and invite few people at a time. But here too, observe the necessary sequence.

3. The objective of the invitation must not be pride, ostentation and competition. Rather, the previously-mentioned three objectives should be considered.

Now understand well that it is not necessary to accept every invitation. There are certain etiquette and prerequisites for accepting an invitation.

1. Do not differentiate between rich and poor. In other words, abstain from accepting the invitations of the wealthy while declining the invitations of the poor. This is because pride is prohibited by the Sharīʿat. Some pious people of the past declined all invitations for fear of this. They used to say: “It is a shameful thing to wait for curry.” Another saint said: “Placing my hand in the cup of another is synonymous to lowering my neck before him.” In other words, it will mean that I disgraced myself and made myself subservient to him. There are many proud people of the past who used to accept the invitations of the wealthy and decline the invitations of the poor. This is against the Sunnat. Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to accept the invitations of the poor, the slaves and everyone else.

We quoted the statement of a saint who said: “Placing my hand in the cup of another is synonymous to lowering my neck before him.” Some ʿulamāʾ say that it is against the Sunnat, but this is not the case

because when an inviter is not pleased by the acceptance of an invitation and is not thankful of the one who accepted his invitation, and instead, considers it a favour on the one to whom he extended the invitation – then this is undoubtedly a matter of disgrace and humiliation. As for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* accepting the invitation of everyone, it was because he understood that the inviter will be most grateful for the acceptance of the invitation. He will consider Rasūlullāh's acceptance to be a source of honour, pride and reward in this world and the Hereafter. Therefore, different rulings are given for different situations.

If you suspect that the invitation extended by a certain person is a burden for him, i.e. he is not doing it out of sincerity and love, but for show and competition, then it will not be Sunnat to accept that invitation. Instead, it will be most appropriate to defer your attendance in a subtle manner. This is why some Sufis say: Do not go to an invitation except of the person who believes that you are eating your sustenance, and that he is merely conveying the trust to you which he had been safeguarding. Furthermore, he must be grateful over your acceptance of his invitation; he must not count it as a favour on his part.

2. One of the etiquette of accepting an invitation is that it must not be declined merely because it is far away. In the same way, it must not be declined just because the inviter is a poor person. It is not permissible to do this.

3. Do not accept the invitation if the food is doubtful, if the arrangements [such as catering] were made from impermissible income, or evil is committed at the place. For example, the carpet is made of silk, the

utensils are of silver, the roof or walls has pictures of animate objects, there is singing and music or any other type of play and amusement, backbiting is committed there, lies are spoken, false accusations are made, etc. Similarly, do not accept an invitation if the inviter is a bidʿatī, flagrant sinner, mischief-maker, or desirous of pomp and ostentation.

4. The objective of accepting an invitation must not be solely to fill the stomach. In such a case, the invitation will become a worldly event. You should rather have a good intention so that when you do accept it, you will receive the reward of the Hereafter. The intention should be following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "I will accept an invitation even if it is for a meal of trotters."

Another intention should be that you want to bring joy to the heart of a believer. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "When a person makes a believer happy, he has made Allāh *taʿālā* happy."

Another intention should be that you are going to visit a believer so that you are included among those who meet each other for Allāh's sake. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* mentions two reasons: (1) to visit each other for Allāh's sake, (2) to spend on each other for Allāh's sake. The act of spending has been fulfilled, now make the intention of visiting for Allāh's sake.

Also make the intention that you will save yourself from people having evil thoughts about you. If you do not accept the invitation, it may well be that people will think that you are proud, ill-mannered or that you are scorning them. But if you accept the invitation, these thoughts will come to an end.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What excellent etiquette for the inviter and the invited! We ought to put them into practice. (compiler)

COMPREHENSIVE INVOCATIONS

Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* is the leader of the Prophets. He makes the following duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā*:

فَإِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّيْ إِلَّا رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ. الَّذِيْ خَلَقَنِيْ فَهُوَ يَهْدِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِيْ وَيَسْقِيْنِ. وَإِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ يُمِيْتُنِيْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْ أَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لِيْ خَطِيْئَتِيْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ. رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ حُكْمًا وَّأَلْحِقْنِيْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ.

They are my enemies, except the Lord of the worlds. He who created me. So it is He who shows me the way. And it is He who feeds me and gives me to drink. When I fall ill, it is He who cures me. It is He who will cause me to die and then give me life again. It is He of whom I hope that He will forgive me my faults on the day of judgement. "O my Lord! Bestow on me wisdom and include me among the righteous."[1]

If the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* did not make duʿā’ and teach us, we would not know how to make duʿā’. Do you think the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are ordinary and insignificant teachings? They are all proven through divine revelation. Why, then, should there be no benefit in them? There will definitely be benefit in them. If man adopts these teachings, they will certainly have an effect according to the level and capability of each person.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shuʿarā’, 26: 77-83.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيْمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ.

O Allāh! You are most pardoning and generous. You love to pardon, so pardon me.

This is a duʿā’ of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* who was sinless. Since divine revelation from Allāh *taʿālā* comes to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, the words which they use come to them from Allāh *taʿālā*. The Auliyā’ also teach duʿā’ and dhikr, but the teachings of non-Prophets can never compare with those of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

I say to the people, all of you are surrounded by illnesses and ailments. Anyone you look at has some sort of illness. Why, then, do you not make the following duʿā’ which Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ عِيْشَةً نَّقِيَّةً، وَّمِيْتَةً سَوِيَّةً، وَّمَرَدًّا غَيْرَ مُخْزِيٍّ وَّلَا فَاضِحٍ

O Allāh! I ask You for a pure life, a peaceful death, and a passing away which is neither disgraceful nor dishonourable.

In other words, I must not become so old that I fall into the hardships and difficulties of old-age. I ask You for a death which is neither disgraceful nor dishonourable. A death which does not cast me into disgrace, does not cause me to fall into tribulation, and does not expose my faults and evils.

Look at what a short but comprehensive duʿā’ Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made – it encompasses all the good of Dīn and this world. He made duʿā’ for a good life, death in a good condition, and to be saved from disgrace in the Hereafter. Do you think there is no lesson for the ummat in this duʿā’?

People say that the laity are not affected. They are wrong. There are many servants of Allāh *taʿālā* who perform tahajjud salāh and cry to Allāh *taʿālā* at night. What do you know about them? If you want to see the laity affected, then speak to them about things which will affect them. Relate to them the stories of the saints.

Note: Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* asked us to make this duʿā' specifically for him. Its importance can be gauged from this. (compiler)

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* related a story of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* in his *Gulistān*. He was lying on the pebbles of the Haram Sharīf and making this duʿā': "O Allāh! Pardon me. If I am eligible for punishment, then raise me as a blind person on the day of Resurrection so that I am not embarrassed in the presence of pious people."

I ask you, if this is the level of fear of the Hereafter of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and Auliyā', will you not adopt this way? The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* will be fearful, the Auliyā' will be fearful, and when you hear all this, will you respond by laughing? After hearing these incidents, can a person have the courage to say that he was not affected by them?

The 'ulamā' have to be spiritual

The ʿulamā' deliver talks, many people attend and listen. How, then, can we say that the people are not desirous of Dīn? They are presenting themselves for Dīn according to the level on which they are. It is now the work of an ʿālim to create the correct and true quest for Dīn in them, and to teach them the real Dīn. In other words, remove them from customs and bring them towards the reality. Convey them from the external to the internal. This is only possible if the

ʿulamāʾ themselves are people of spirituality – a quality which is extremely rare in our times. The ʿulamāʾ have abandoned these things. How, then, can they demand them from others? No sooner the ʿulamāʾ give up speaking on a certain subject, misguidance is bound to enter that subject. If people of a certain area give it up, deviation and misguidance will creep into that area. If people in general give it up, general and all-encompassing misguidance will creep in.

It is necessary to speak about the Hereafter

Nowadays no one speaks about the Hereafter. This is why a vacuum has developed in Dīn. The Hereafter is one of the fundamentals which has an effect on everything else. If fear of the Hereafter develops in your heart, will it be possible for you not to be affected by a lecture? Just as lectures on s̲alāh, fasting, etc. are delivered; and these have some effect in the sense that a few people are affected and they practise – in the same way if the Hereafter is discussed, people will listen. Even if a few people listen, it will be good enough. It is not possible that no one will pay heed. After all, the Hereafter is the original abode of a believer. If it is not discussed, it will result in hard-heartedness and the spread of misguidance. Subsequently, it will be very difficult to remove people from that level. Now even if an ʿālim speaks on this subject, the people will not accept it readily. This is what I refer to as misguidance and deviation. I have seen people becoming affected very quickly. This is why the Ahlullāh do not concentrate too much on the external. They pay more attention to the heart.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say that rectification of internal abilities take a bit longer. As for external actions, these can be rectified

in a minute. The greatest work of the Auliyā' is to rectify internal capabilities and sentiments.

There was a person who used to come frequently to me, and people used to ask him why he keeps on coming to me. Those very same people used to perform salāh behind me, but none of them were interested in a special relationship. They used to think that if a person frequented my place, he will leave their family and tribe. If people start leaving it one by one, there will be no tribe left. They would not stop anyone from performing salāh behind me because they themselves used to perform it behind me. But they would vex a person when he performed tahajjud and engaged in dhikr, and they would castigate him. I am saying this while speaking on the fact that when a person places a foot in real Dīn, people try to stop him. However, the dhikr eventually has an effect and they become affected and impressed. I used to say to those people: "Why do you malign dhikr? It is better than your backbiting and complaining. A person repeats the name of Allāh *taʿālā* thousands of times." I continued speaking on this subject, and then asked that man [whom the people were castigating]: "How's the situation now?" He replied: "Everything is fine; no one is saying anything." Do you want to know what the matter was? Their entire line of thought had changed. They were devoid of concern and desire for Dīn; and they were caught up in corrupt thoughts. Once their line of thought was corrected, they abstained from castigating and criticizing the person.

Muslims are coming towards Dīn

I have been observing the Muslims for some time and I noticed them making a turn in the right direction. I noticed the condition of the laity improving, and the western educated Muslims also showing more interest

in Dīn. While I was travelling from Allāhābād, a person said to me that he is going to teach his son the Qur'ān. I said to him: "Now that you are saying this, we too will make du'ā' for him that Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses him with sustenance and keeps him happy in this world."

A son who was in London wrote to his father saying: "Teach the boys Arabic, impart Dīnī knowledge to them, make them Maulānās, because these are things which will be of benefit." I said to the father: "Look! You were angry over this very same Dīnī education. Now your own son is writing the same thing." Do you think America and London can stop people from Dīn. There are many servants of Allāh *ta'ālā* living in these places who are extremely pious. Religiosity does not stop you from acquiring of this world. Even the Sharī'at does not stop you. Have you not heard the phrase "success in both worlds"? Does it mean that a man must go around begging in this world, and not earn of it?

Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

فَاٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[1]

Does this verse not make mention of success and wellness in both worlds?

Yes, what is prohibited of this world is that which makes a person heedless of Dīn. The very same people who are pious in this world and believe in the unseen

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 148.

have been referred to as the "successful ones" in the Qur'ān.

أُولٰٓئِكَ عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ ۗ وَأُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ

These people are on guidance from their Lord, and they are the ones who shall reach their goal.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* mentions two rewards – one is that they are on guidance, and the other is that they will be successful. Success means achieving one's objective. What this means is that these are the people who are successful in this world and in Dīn as well.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* progressed in Dīn to the extent that no one can equal them. In the same way they progressed materially. The pious people receive everything in this world – they receive īmān and they are not less in wealth. Another prize which they receive in this world is that they are on guidance – they remain on the straight path.

The sincerity of a wealthy person

A wealthy man came to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* but Hadrat Maulānā was not present at the time. Despite this, the man rolled out a carpet at the spot where Hadrat Maulānā used to sit. When Hadrat arrived and saw this, he did not say anything. He guessed that it must be the same man who brought it. Because the man was religious and sincere, Hadrat did not say anything. He did not ask him why he laid out the carpet without obtaining permission. Why did he act against Hadrat's principles? Normally, no one would dare do anything like this without permission.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 5.

The same man took permission from Hadrat and took a Maulānā Sāhib to his house. He made the Maulānā Sāhib to calculate the inheritance for several generations, allocated the shares, and distributed them. It took several months to complete this task. During this entire period, he hosted the Maulānā Sāhib, saw to his meals and all other necessities. When the calculation and distribution was completed, the man came to Hadrat Maulānā who asked him: "Has anything remained?" The man replied: "Hadrat, a large amount has remained. I am still better off than my brothers." I am relating this story to demonstrate to you that with Dīn, a person also receives of this world. Allāh *taʿālā* gives a lot to His righteous servants in this worldly life. He does not deprive them.

The karāmāt of the Auliyā'

(1)

Some people went into a masjid and saw a rope lying on the floor on the spot where the imām stands. They were astonished to see a rope there and wondered where it had come from. On inquiring, they learnt that there was a saint who performed salāh there the previous night. A snake approached the spot where he was performing salāh. The saint was in some special spiritual condition at the time. It was dark and he could not make out the snake. He took it in his hand and asked: "What is this? Is this a rope?" The snake turned into a rope.

The Ahlullāh sometimes receive such powers from Allāh *taʿālā* on account of Dīn. When they utter something, it becomes the reality. It was the saint's karāmat (supernatural feat). We cannot object because the karāmāt of the Auliyā' is affirmed in the Sharīʿat. They receive great powers from Allāh *taʿālā*

by virtue of their spiritual efforts and striving. Allāh *taʿālā* does not deprive His special servants. The fact of the matter is that they give up their own will, so Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils all their wants. Hadrat Maulānā used to quote the following couplet in his talks:

> Allāh *taʿālā* fulfils your desires. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to fulfil the wants of His pious servants.

The karāmāt of the Auliyā’ are from Allāh *taʿālā* and we must not reject them. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

أَلَآ إِنَّ أَوْلِيَآءَ اللهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ. لَهُمُ الْبُشْرٰى فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ط لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِكَلِمٰتِ اللهِ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ.

Remember! Those who are the friends of Allāh – neither is there fear on them nor will they grieve. Those who believed and continued fearing. For them are glad tidings in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. The words of Allāh do not change. This is the supreme triumph.[1]

How can you reject this? Whether a person is a walī or not, the least he can do is to affirm the friendship of the Auliyā’ of Allāh *taʿālā*. How can it be that you are not one yourself, and you reject it for others? This is against the quality of a believer. Rejection is the quality of unbelievers.

(2)

When in any year the Nile River did not rise sufficiently and its water did not reach the farms, the

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[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 62-64.

people used to become extremely worried. There was a saint to whom the people would go and complain about the shortage of water. They would say to him that people are dying because of it. The saint would take his water-jug and lower it into the river to fill it. The moment he did this, the water level would rise and irrigate all the farms. The water would fill the farms so much, that it would become difficult for the farmers to plant their seeds and carry out other tasks. They would come back to the saint and say: "Hadrat, the abundance of water is making it difficult for us to farm." He would raise his water-jug, go to the same spot, and gargle his mouth. The river would draw its water back, and the farms would become cultivable.

(3)

There is a certain place about which it is said that the poison of scorpions does not have an effect. The entire area became like this through the karāmat of a certain saint. If a scorpion is brought from another region into this region, it too loses its poisonous effect. Now what will you say about this? It is a matter with Allāh *taʿālā* – He does as He wills. There is nothing to be astonished, nor are we permitted to reject.

(4)

Shāh ʿAbd ar-Rahīm Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is the father of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. As he was walking one day, he was singing the following quadruplet of Shaykh Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* with much enjoyment. However, he read only three lines, and could not remember the fourth. This caused a break in the enjoyment which he was experiencing.

> You are wasting away your life when you
> think of anyone apart from the Beloved.

> It is a waste of time to read anything apart from the secrets of love.
>
> O Saʿdī! Wash off the surface of your heart from all apart from Allāh.

As he got stuck at the third line, an elderly man passed by and read the fourth line for him:

> Knowledge which does not show the correct path is ignorance.

Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* was overjoyed like a person who found his lost item. He addressed the elderly man: “Tell me, who are you?” He replied: “I am known as Mus̲lih̲ ad-Dīn Shīrāzī.” Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* wanted to step forward and shake hands with him, but his feet became so heavy that he could not move from his place. He could not shake hands with him.

Books are filled with incidents of this nature. They can neither be rejected nor disregarded. Rather, we have to believe them.

WHEN IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Raḫmān Jāmī *raḫimahullāh* related:

There is a man who is employed in the police department. He related the following incident to me. It was the practice of Ḫaḏrat Wālā [Ḫaḏrat Musliḫul Ummat *raḫimahullāh*] to go outdoors in the evening. I accompanied Ḫaḏrat Wālā's rickshaw one evening. On the way, one of my fellow policemen offered salām to me and asked: "Is everything okay?" I replied: "Yes, everything is okay." When the rickshaw proceeded, Ḫaḏrat Wālā called me by pointing with his fingers. It was Ḫaḏrat Wālā's practice to recite the Qur'ān along the way, so if he wanted to say anything, he would make gestures. The attendants were aware of Ḫaḏrat Wālā's habit, so anyone who accompanied him would remain alert. It should not happen that Ḫaḏrat Wālā indicates to something and they are looking in another direction.

Thus, I went to Ḫaḏrat Wālā the moment he pointed for me to come to him. He asked: "What was that policeman saying?" I replied: "He is my associate and was asking about my wellbeing." Ḫaḏrat Wālā asked: "What did you say?" I got scared when Ḫaḏrat Wālā asked this question because I realized I must have given a foolish answer. With much trepidation, I said: "I told him that everything is okay." Ḫaḏrat Wālā asked: "Do you know when everything will be okay for you?" I replied: "Ḫaḏrat, please tell me." He said: "Brother, the wellbeing of a policeman will only be realized when the lives, wealth and honour of people is protected." Ḫaḏrat Wālā then asked: "Do you know when everything will be okay for a Maulānā?" I

replied: “Hadrat, please tell me.” He said: “The wellbeing of a Maulānā will only be realized when the Dīn and īmān of people are protected.” He then asked: “Did you understand?” I replied: “Yes Hadrat, I understood.”

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* expounded on the responsibilities of both groups – the police and the ʿulamā’. Each group ought to imprint this in the heart. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

ALLĀH’S GUIDANCE AND CARNAL DESIRES

The following Hadīth is quoted in *Mishkāt Sharīf*:

عن عبد الله بن عمرو بن العاص قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به.[1]

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀs radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with.

Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *rahimahullāh* explains this Hadīth as follows:

يجوز أن يحمل هذا على نفي أصل الإيمان، أي حتى يكون تابعا مقتديا لما جئت به من الشرع عن اعتقاد لا عن إكراه وخوف سيف كالمنافقين. وقيل المراد به نفي الكمال أي لا يكمل إيمان أحدكم حتى يكون ميل نفسه اي ما تشتهيه تبعا لما جئت به من الأحكام الشرعية، فإن وافقها هواه اشتغل بها لشرعيتها لا لانها هوى، وإن خالفها اجتنب هواه فحينئذ يكون مؤمنا كاملا.[2]

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[1] مشكوة ثاني، باب الاعتصام، ص ٣٠، حديث ٦.

[2] مرقاة المفاتيح، ١٦٨.

This Hadīth could refer to the negation of īmān itself. This would mean that none of you can be a believer until he follows the Sharīʿat which I brought with firm conviction, and not under compulsion or fear of the sword like the hypocrites. Another view is that it refers to the negation of perfection of īmān. In other words, the īmān of none of you can be perfect until the desires of his self are subservient to the injunctions of the Sharīʿat which I have come with. Even if the injunctions are in line with the desires of his self, he practises on them because they have been promulgated by the Sharīʿat and not because they are the desires of his self. If the injunctions are against his carnal self, he desists from the desires of his self. If he does this, he will be a perfect believer.

The crux of the above is that the Hadīth could have two meanings. One is that the person does not even believe that his order has been sent by Allāh *taʿālā* and brought by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Disregarding these injunctions will mean that he is a rejecter. He will therefore not have īmān. The words *Lā Yu'minu* are thus in their actual meaning – the person is not a believer.

The other meaning could be that the person believes in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and also believes that these injunctions are from Allāh *taʿālā*. However, he has shortcomings in his actions. He is not observing the internal or external requisites of this īmān. This person is a believer but his īmān will be defective. He will not have perfect īmān. The first meaning is related to beliefs while the second is related to actions.

From this statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* we learn that one is the Sharīʿat and its opposite is the desires of the self. They are totally

opposite to each other. The person who is a slave of his carnal self cannot be obedient to the Sharīʿat and cannot be a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*. The person who is obedient to the Sharīʿat can never be a slave of his desires.

In every era, the biggest obstacle to accepting the truth has been man's carnal self and its desires. Sometimes even the hearts of obstinate people accept the truthfulness of the call of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, but their carnal selves interject and prevent them from accepting the truth. This is why the Qur'ān and Hadīth emphasise discarding the desires of the self and to protect one's self from its schemes and plots. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَفَرَاَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ عَلٰى سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰى بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً. فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ، اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ.

Look at the one who has made his own lust his deity. And Allāh, knowing him as such, led him astray and set a seal upon his ears and his heart, and cast darkness over his eyes. So now who will bring him onto the path beside Allāh? Do you not ponder?[1]

This verse clearly states that the person who makes his self his deity, and instead of following Allāh's order he obeys the desires of his self, then Allāh *taʿālā* never guides him. We learn from this that a person who follows the orders and prohibitions of his self and not of Allāh *taʿālā*, then it is as though he has made his self his deity. He gives it the same status which he ought to have given to Allāh *taʿālā*. In this way, he becomes – by his actions and his choice – a slave of

[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 23.

his carnal self and slave of his desires instead of being a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

This verse shows that success - admission into Paradise – and failure – admission into Hell – is based on the condition of the carnal self.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ

Who can be more astray than he who follows his desires without any guidance from Allāh?[2]

Man's excellence lies in subjugating his carnal self to the Sharī'at

Another point which we learn is that the opposite of guidance (hudā) is lust or desire (hawā). Man's excellence lies in making the carnal self in line with the Sharīʿat, subjugating it, imposing on it to be obedient to the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

[2] Sūrah al-Qas̲as̲, 28: 50.

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا. فَاَلْهَمَهَا فُجُوْرَهَا وَتَقْوٰهَا. قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا.

By the self and as He proportioned it. He then inspired it with the understanding of evil and righteousness. He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يَا دَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ.

O Dā'ūd! We made you a vicegerent on earth, so rule with justice among the people and do not follow the desire of the self or else it would lead you astray from the path of Allāh.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* issued one order to Hadrat Dā'ūd *ʿalayhis salām*: "rule with justice among the people", and one prohibition: "do not follow the desire of the self". This was related to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Based on this, it is obligatory on the ummat to follow the Sharīʿat and harām for it to follow the carnal self. Allāh *taʿālā* addresses Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly in another verse:

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَاءَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 7-10.

[2] Sūrah Sād, 38: 26.

We then placed you on a path concerning matters of religion. So follow this path and do not follow the desires of the ignorant.[1]

We learn from this that desire is the thing which stops a person from Allāh's path. It is because of it that a person disregards the Qur'ān, discards the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and gives up following the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. Subsequently, he follows his self and whatever he does not do is too little.

The Qur'ān is filled with discussions on the carnal self and its rebelliousness. The statement of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which I quoted at the beginning is in fact a commentary of the Qur'ān. I am referring to the H̲adīth: "None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with."

In the light of these texts the Sufis perceived the importance of the carnal self and made it the subject of their science. The ʿulamā' say that the actual objective of the Sharīʿat is to remove man from the desires of his self. ʿAllāmah Shāt̲ibī *rah̲imahullāh*[2] writes in *al-Iʿtis̲ām*:

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 18.

[2] He is an esteemed scholar of the Mālikī madh-hab who wrote a scholarly work on the principles of jurisprudence titled *al-Muwāfaqāt*, and another on the wisdom of the Sharīʿat, titled *al-Iʿtis̲ām*. Both books enjoy wide acceptance in academic circles.

ان الشريعة موضوعةٌ لاخراج المكلَّف عن داعية هواه حتّى يكون عبدًا لله.[١]

The Sharīʿat has been laid down to remove accountable man from the demands of his desires so that he becomes a true slave of Allāh.

He writes in *al-Muwāfaqāt*:

قصد الشارع من وضع الشرائع إخراج النفوس عن أهوائها وعوائدها.[٢]

Allāh taʿālā laid down the Sharīʿat to remove the selves from their desires and customs.

He writes in another place:

نعم وضعُ الشريعة على أن تكون أهواءُ النفوس تابعةً لمقصود الشارع فيها.

Yes, the Sharīʿat is laid down so that the desires of the carnal selves are subservient to the objective of the promulgator [Allāh taʿālā].

In the first quotation he uses the word *ikhrāj* (to remove). This probably makes reference to the fact that man is naturally caught up with his carnal self. His desires do not want to leave him. Once he acts on the injunctions of the Sharīʿat, his desires leave him – like when something has to be removed by shoving it aside or giving it a push.

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[1] الإعتصام، ج ١، ص ٣٣٧.

[2] الموافقات، ص ٣٣٦.

We learn from this that there is a conflict struggle between the Sharīʿat and the desire. When man strives to come out of its influence, the evils of the carnal self are removed.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* delves into this subject in both books, but to a more detailed extent in *al-Muwāfaqāt.*

The purpose of sending down the Sharī'at

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes:

المقصد الشرعي من وضع الشريعة إخراج المكلف عن داعية هواه حتى يكون عبد الله اختيارا كما هو عبد الله اضطرارا.[1]

The Sharīʿat has been laid down to remove accountable man from the demands of his desires so that he who until now was a slave of Allāh by compulsion [through his conceptual creation] becomes a true slave of Allāh by choice [by practising on the orders of Allāh taʿālā].

I just said to you that ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* was an esteemed scholar whose writings have been widely appreciated by the ʿulamā'. He says that following the desire of the self is from among the innovations while its opposite, viz. giving up one's desires and following the texts is a Sunnat. ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī's words "so that he becomes a true slave of Allāh by choice" mean:

يكون عبد الله اختيارا أي طوعا ورغبة تشريعا عن هواه وفانيا عن سوء اختيار نفسه وباقيا بأمر ربه ونهيه وباقيا بشريعته وبحسن اختياره.

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[1] الموافقات، ج ٢، ص ١٦٨.

In other words, in addition to being a slave of Allāh taʿālā by compulsion, he practises on the Sharīʿat and enters His servitude by his own choice and enthusiasm. He does this by obliterating (separating) himself from the evil desires of his self, remains steadfast on the orders and prohibitions of Allāh taʿālā, and steadfast on Allāh's Sharīʿat through his sound choice.

This means that no one in this world is out of the obedience of Allāh *taʿālā*. Every action of man takes place under Allāh's knowledge and will. When it comes to conceptual matters, man is compelled to obey Allāh's orders. In other words, if Allāh *taʿālā* causes him to fall ill, he will have to fall ill. If He constricts his livelihood, he will have to bear poverty. In these matters and others like them, man will have to obey Allāh *taʿālā*, even if he is an unbeliever.

However, the Sharīʿat has come so that as regards matters in which man has the choice – e.g. good and evil, lawful and unlawful, and all other matters in which he can choose one over the other – then it is necessary for him to act on what the Sharīʿat instructed him to act on, and to discard the desires of the self. By doing this, he will be wilfully presenting himself for Allāh's obedience and servitude, and becoming a slave of Allāh *taʿālā* by choice in accordance with Allāh's will. The system which man has been given in this world for living his life – the Sharīʿat – man must follow it and not follow his carnal self. If he follows his self, he will be disgraced. He will be distanced from Allāh's mercy and help. Even though He is still a slave of Allāh *taʿālā*, his servitude and slavery is by compulsion and force; and this is not considered. On the other hand, if he follows the Sharīʿat, he will be honoured and accepted. He will

acquire the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In such a case, he will be a true servant of Allāh *taʿālā* by his own choice, will, enthusiasm and in line with the Sharīʿat. This is what is required by the Sharīʿat, and this is its objective.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What unique themes we are reading by virtue of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. How else would we have got an opportunity to read such themes? When I met Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Hasanī Nadwī *rahimahullāh* on one occasion, he said: "Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib is a unique person. From so many books, he quotes extracts from *Muwāfaqāt* and other similar books." (compiler)

You have heard what the scholars of the external self had to say about the carnal self and the Sharīʿat. Now listen to what the Sufis and scholars of the internal self have to say.

In his commentary to the previously-quoted Hadīth, Hadrat Mullā ʿAlī Qārī *rahimahullāh* quotes the statements of a few Sufis. Some are quoted below:

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that a person cannot be a believer unless his desires are subservient to his Sharīʿat. This means that as long as his desire – which is the source of all evils, in fact, it is a false deity to which the desire is obedient – does not become subservient to my [Rasūlullāh's] glittering Sunnat and clear religion, the person cannot be a believer. An indication of this is that his various worries and thoughts which stem from the desires of the self and inclination of the temperament must all become one single worry. That worry is what is connected to the order of Allāh *taʿālā* and following His Sharīʿat. That Sharīʿat whose objective is to pay homage to Allāh *taʿālā* on one hand, and to show

mercy to His creation on the other hand. A person rightly said:

كَانَتْ لِقَلْبِيْ أَهْوَاءٌ مُفَرِّقَةٌ – فَاسْتَجْمَعَتْ إِذْ رَأَتْكَ الْعَيْنُ أَهْوَائِيْ

وَصَارَ يَحْسُدُنِيْ مَنْ كُنْتُ اَحْسُدُهُ – وَصِرْتُ مَوْلَى الْوَرٰى إِذْ صِرْتَ مَوْلَائِيْ

تَرَكْتُ لِلْخَلْقِ دُنْيَاهُمْ وَدِيْنَهُمْ – شُغْلًا بِحُبِّكَ يَا دِيْنِيْ وَدُنْيَائِيْ

My heart had various desires but they all gathered [and became one] when my eyes beheld You. The one whom I was envious of now became envious of me because I became popular among the creation. This happened when You become my master and beloved. I left the creation to their world and religion, while I became occupied in Your love. I realized that You alone are my Dīn and my world.

When the different worries of the person became one – and that is following the orders of Allāh *taʿālā* and the Sharīʿat – he does not turn from Dīn except by the order of Dīn, and does not turn around unless the Sharīʿat orders him to do so. This is a perfect believer and a unique individual whose tauh̲īd is accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. As for the one who turns away, follows his carnal self, is desirous of the self and wants to please it, he is an unbeliever. In other words, he is a loser as regards Dīn and his worldly life. The one who follows the Sharīʿat but does not carry out its subsidiary matters is a fāsiq – a flagrant sinner. The one who does the opposite, i.e. follows the subsidiary matters but rejects its fundamentals is a hypocrite. When man's desire turns to guidance, then it is like butter and honey getting mixed. It is like light being added to light, and happiness to happiness.[1]

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[1] *Mirqāt al-Mafātīh̲*, p. 376.

The author of *Mirqāt* quotes an objection and a reply to it. I believe it is also beneficial.

Objection:

You say that the Sharīʿat which Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came with is an embodiment of light and effulgence. On the other hand, the desire of the self is an internal darkness which stems from man's nature. How, then, can the carnal darkness become subservient to Dīnī effulgence?

Answer:

The self (nafs) is an element within the body which is born from the mixing of the body and soul. The soul is delicate and spiritual, while the body is dense and dark. The self is between the two. In other words, it accepts the delicateness of spirituality and the density of the body. This is the same self whose setting right and balancing Allāh *taʿālā* is referring to when He says:

وَنَفْسٍ وَّمَا سَوّٰهَا

By the self and as He proportioned it.[1]

It must be proportioned in such a way that the animalistic and dark soul is established in the spiritual soul like the light on the pupil of the eye. Based on the proportioning and balancing of the self, it has the ability to accept good and bad, evil and piety. When matters related to piety have the upper hand, it is cleansed of filth and turns towards Dīn and accepts conviction. When matters related to sin and iniquity have the upper hand, the same self becomes a

[1] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 7.

slave of desires and leads man towards the path of destruction. An Arab poet portrays this theme in a very fine and delicate manner. He says:

نُوْنُ الْهَوَانِ مِنَ الْهَوٰى مَسْرُوْقَة – فَصَرِيْعُ كُلِّ هَوًى صَرِيْعُ هَوَانِ

The words *hawān* and *hawā* are one and the same. The letters of both are the same except that *hawān* has an additional letter *nūn*. We can – so to speak – say that the *nūn* was stolen from *hawā*. This is why the person who is struck by *hawā* (desire) is actually struck by *hawān* (humiliation).

What this means is that the person who is caught up by his desires will inevitably suffer humiliation in both worlds. There is no doubt that it is this very same desire of the self which causes man to go astray. Actions can be rectified very quickly. Problems and difficulties are faced when the rectification of the self is done. Once man understands this and takes control of his self, his rectification becomes easy. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that as long as a person's desire is not subservient to what I came with, he cannot be a true believer. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made specific mention of *hawā* because mans good fortune or wretchedness lies in its subservience or non-subservience.

The author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* writes:

إِعْلَمْ أَنَّ مُخَالَفَةَ النَّفْسِ رَأْسُ الْعِبَادَةِ

Know well that acting against the carnal self is the peak of all worship. (In fact, it is the fundamental of worship).

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent statement. We had always been hearing

اَلدُّعَاءُ مُخُّ الْعِبَادَةِ

Duʿā’ is the essence of worship.

Now we have learnt:

مُخَالَفَةُ النَّفْسِ رَأْسُ الْعِبَادَةِ

A most important reality has been exposed. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* says:

Mental thinking is the key to worship. A sign of man’s correctness is his opposition of his self and desire. The opposition of both entails opposing their desires. They must not be followed.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* discusses the self repeatedly in his *Mathnawī*. He warns against the desire of the self as follows:

> Never ever befriend the desires of the self, your wishes, and your enjoyable thoughts because they will lead you astray from Allāh’s path.

He writes in another place while creating fear about the desire of the self:

> Revive your īmān with honesty of the heart, mere verbal utterances are not enough. You have kept the desires of the self revived inside you. Know well that as long as desires remain alive, īmān cannot be revived. (As stated in a Hadīth:
>
> لا يؤمن احدكم حتى يكون هواه تبعا لما جئت به
>
> None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the

Sharīʿat which I came with. This is because the desire of the self is a lock to this door (of sciences and realities). This is why the realities are not being exposed.

You are rationalizing the authentic and well-preserved words of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. You ought to rationalize your own self, i.e. change yourself from within. Do not rationalize the words of the Qur'ān, i.e. do not change them from their original meanings. Your mental powers are rationalizing the words of the Qur'ān, while you ought to leave them in their original meanings. You should rather change your way of thinking so that it is changed from a corrupt one to a correct one. You are rationalizing the Qur'ān merely on the basis of the desires of your self. Consequently, the brilliant and clear meanings of the Qur'ān have become crooked and changed.

Note: This practice is very common nowadays. Incorrect meanings and explanations are given to the Qur'ān, resulting in numerous deviated sects which are leading astray people of little intelligence. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Look at how Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* speaks out against the carnal self, and how he warns the ummat against it. The Sufis in every era not only warned us against it, they even saved us. However, because the people of desires follow their desires so ardently – like how the people on the truth follow the texts of the Qur'ān and Hadīth – it is not easy for them to leave it. There is no doubt that following the self is abhorrently despicable. Its despicability is sufficiently

demonstrated from the fact that the person who is obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* is known as an Allāh-worshipper, while the one who does not adhere to His orders and follows his desires instead is known as a self-worshipper and desire-worshipper.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most beautiful facts which our shaykh, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, is steering us towards. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him.

Hadrat Khwājah Maʿsūm Sirhindī Mujaddidī *rahimahullāh* explains this subject in one of his letters. He writes:

> You must know that just as the outward form of īmān is dependent on rejecting the idols and other gods of the kāfirs, the reality of īmān is dependent on rejecting the carnal self. In other words, it is dependent on saving yourself from the desires of the self and from attaching the heart from all apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. The desire is also like a deity. Allāh *taʿālā* says: "Have you seen the person who made the desire of his self his deity?" This verse makes reference to this angle. Based on this, the saints say: "Your objective is your deity."

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* said:

فالعبادة كل العبادة في مخالفة نفسك وهواك، قال الله تعالى ولا تتبع الهوى فيضلك عن سبيل الله، وقال لداؤد اهجر هواك فإنما لا منازع ينازعني في ملكي غير الهوى، والحكاية المشهورة عن ابي يزيد البسطامي

لما رأى رب العزة في المنام فقال له كيف الطريق إليك قال أترك نفسك وتعال فقال فانسلخت من نفسي كما تنسلخ الحية من جلده.[1]

Worship in its entirety lies in opposing your self and your desire. Allāh taʿālā says: "Do not follow the desire or else it will lead you astray from Allāh's path." He said to Dā'ūd ʿalayhis salām: Keep away from your desire because there is no one in My kingdom to dispute with Me except the desire of the self. There is a well-known incident about Hadrat Bā Yazīd Bustāmī rahimahullāh that when he saw Allāh taʿālā in a dream, he asked: "What is the path to reach You?" Allāh taʿālā said: "Discard your self and come towards Me." Hadrat Bā Yazīd says: "I extricated myself from my self as a snake sheds its skin."

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at how our seniors paid so much of attention to discarding the carnal self. Consequently, they came out of it and reached Allāh *taʿālā*. Unfortunately this is not our condition. We are proud to take their names and even go to the extent of affiliating ourselves to them. Someone calls himself a Qādrī, another a Mujaddidī, another a Chishtī, and yet another a Sahrawardī, and so on. (compiler)

Have you seen the great seekers of Allāh *taʿālā* of the past! Once they understood that the self is the obstacle to establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, they cast it aside just as a snake sheds its skin. It is undoubtedly the fruit of the sincerity and Allāh-devotion of these personalities that they are able to subdue such a rebellious and insubordinate thing like the self. Had it not been for this, the self which is

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[1] فتوح الغيب، ص ٦٧.

man's worst enemy would have certainly left them astray.

This is why Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam too warned us against it and said:

إِنَّ أَعْدٰى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِيْ بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Furthermore, Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said that subjugating the desires of the self to the Sharīʿat is a sign of īmān. He said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ اَحَدُكُمْ حَتّٰى يَكُوْنَ هَوَاهُ تَبْعًا لِمَا جِئْتُ بِهِ[2]

None of you can be a complete believer until his desires are subservient to the Sharīʿat which I came with.

Nonetheless, we have to understand that coming out of and leaving the carnal is dependent solely on the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. Based on the level of servitude which Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had and also to teach his followers, he made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* in various ways for help in subduing the self. Take the following duʿā' as an example:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِمَّنْ تَوَكَّلَ عَلَيْكَ فَكَفَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَهْدٰكَ فَهَدَيْتَهُ، وَاسْتَنْصَرَكَ فَنَصَرْتَهُ.

O Allāh! Make me of those who placed his trust in You, so You sufficed him; who sought guidance from You, so

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

[2] كنز العمال، ص ٢١٧، حديث ١٠٨.

You guided him; who sought Your help, so You helped him.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* says thereafter:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ وَسَاوِسَ قَلْبِيْ خَشْيَتَكَ وَذِكْرَكَ، وَاجْعَلْ هِمَّتِيْ وَهَوَايَ فِيْمَا تُحِبُّ وَتَرْضٰى.

O Allāh! Turn the whisperings of my heart into Your fear and Your remembrance. Utilize my courage and desire for what You love and are pleased with.

He says in another duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اٰتِ نَفْسِيْ تَقْوٰهَا، وَزَكِّهَا اَنْتَ خَيْرُ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا، اَنْتَ وَلِيُّهَا وَمَوْلَاهَا.

O Allāh! Give piety to my self and purify it – You alone are the best to purify it, You alone are its owner and master.

In the above duʿā' Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* begs Allāh *taʿālā* for the piety of his self and its purification. Allāh *taʿālā* is the One who created the self and its desires. He gives wealth to man and confers various other bounties and favours to him. In the same way, why should it be difficult for Him to give a person piety of the self!? If a person acquires piety of his self or, to rephrase it, if the desire of his self becomes subservient to the Sharīʿat, then this self will not be referred to as blameworthy. Rather, it is praiseworthy and totally in line with the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Through the above-quoted duʿā's Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches his followers that saving one's self from the self and its desires is not easy

without the protection of Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself quotes the following statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* in this regard:

ذٰلِكَ لِيَعْلَمَ اَنِّيْ لَمْ اَخُنْهُ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ كَيْدَ الْخَآئِنِيْنَ

Yūsuf said: This is so that the ʿAzīz may know that I did not betray him in secret and that Allāh does not allow the plot of the treacherous to succeed.[1]

He says thereafter:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ ۚ اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ ؕ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil except those upon whom my Lord has mercy. Surely my Lord is forgiving, merciful.[2]

Did you see the view of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with regard to the self despite being divinely protected from sin! Did you see how they feared it, and how they continually sought Allāh's refuge from its mischief. The fact of the matter is that man cannot subdue the self through his own strength. The easy way is for man to subjugate himself before Allāh *taʿālā* who created the self and placed desires in it. Man must acknowledge his weakness, and beg and beseech Allāh *taʿālā*. He must say: O Allāh! I am weak and incapable. Remove me from the trappings of the self solely through Your grace and kindness, and change its evils into virtues.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 52.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

Glory to Allāh! What an easy prescription taught to us by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If we practise on it, the path will become very easy and near. It was the noble practice of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to read the following duʿā' before every sermon and speech:

وَنَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْ شُرُوْرِ اَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ اَعْمَالِنَا

We seek refuge in Allāh from the mischief of our selves and from the evils of our actions.

We learn from this that the self has mischief in it, and we ought to seek refuge from its mischief.

Now listen to another duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ قِنِيْ شَرَّ نَفْسِيْ

O Allāh! Protect me from the evil of my self

Another duʿā' is made in the tone of seeking refuge:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ شَرِّ نَفْسِيْ، وَشَرِّ الشَّيْطٰنِ وَشِرْكِهِ

O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from the evil of my self, from the evil of Satan and associating with him

The following is a part of a lengthy duʿā' of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

يَا حَيُّ يَا قَيُّوْمُ، بِرَحْمَتِكَ اَسْتَغِيْثُ، اَصْلِحْ لِيْ شَاْنِيْ كُلَّهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ طَرْفَةَ عَيْنٍ

O the Living! O the Self-subsisting! It is through Your mercy that I am seeking help. Set right all my affairs and do not make me rely on my self even for a single moment

Did you see how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge from the mischief of the self. The object is to teach his followers – that if the sinless Messenger of Allāh *taʿālā* can seek refuge from the self in this way, how much more the non-sinless ummat has to fear the self and save itself from its desires!?

You also learnt how the Sufis strove to save themselves from this enemy and what efforts they made to keep themselves protected from it. All the efforts of the Sufis are for the subjugation of the self. Their associates ought to emulate them.

What I want to show you at this point is that the easiest way of achieving this is to follow the Sunnat especially as regards making duʻā'. In other words, if we beg of Allāh *taʿālā* for whatever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* begged him, and seek His refuge from whatever Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge, we will achieve a lot. We will be able to free ourselves from the influences of the self and remain attached to the Sunnat path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. We will then be able to acquire true īmān. After acquiring true īmān, we can be eligible for every type of success and victory in Dīn and in this world. After all, the source of every progress is īmān. We learnt from the Hadīth which we quoted in the beginning that the acquisition of real īmān is dependent on giving up the desires of the self. And the way to do it is to follow the Sunnat.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us. Amīn.

THE REASON FOR OUR DĪNĪ RETROGRESSION (1)

We notice that the condition of our madāris and Islamic centres of today is destroyed. In other words, places which were set up for reformation and rectification have become centres of mischief and corruption. I would like to speak on this subject at this time. My entire discussion is directed to my beloveds and not for outsiders. It is for a seeker, not for a non-seeker.

This discussion is important because the serious level of retrogression which has developed is because of an absence of such discussions. The source of all mischief is the carnal self, and the cause of all evils is bad character. Today people have swept the discussion on the carnal self and morals under the carpet. This is why you will not hear an ʿālim saying: "a backbiter is a flagrant sinner", "spying is harām", "ostentation is polytheism", "coming out of the love for authority is obligatory" as often as he says: "salāh is obligatory" or "alcohol is harām".

Consequently, because we practise a little on the external injunctions, we do have some knowledge of them. But because we do not consider internal actions to be necessary, we do not have any concern to learn about them. There is a famous saying: "Why ask the directions to a place when you do not even have an intention of going there?"

If this shortcoming is found in the teachers and seniors, it is passed on to the students and juniors. Another thing which I am observing nowadays is that

there is some interest in learning the rules and regulations, but there is no attention whatsoever to the rectifying the evils of the carnal self and acquiring its virtues. The following couplet applies to the people of today:

> They consider ostentation to be lawful and consuming alcohol to be unlawful. What an excellent Tarīqat and what a beautiful Sharīʿat!

This deficiency in us is increasing by the day because if we are not going to discuss it, how will people learn of the good and bad of these things? If they don't have knowledge of them, how will they practise? Consequently, the condition today is that there is no one to speak about the evils of the carnal self and the virtues of noble character. If there were such people today, our deplorable condition would not have reached such a level. When a certain branch of knowledge is not even spoken about and discussed, that branch of knowledge will disappear. If the evil of a thing is at least mentioned verbally, people will abstain from having that evil quality.

Discussions on the carnal self and its harms are found in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. The Sufis have written books on this subject. But neither do the madāris discuss it nor do the khānqāhs. Instead, this subject has been shunned everywhere. Discussions on this subject have become so rare and foreign, that if a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* speaks on it, then people oppose it.

The saints of every era strove arduously to remove the evils of the carnal self from within them, and discarded it. Today the worshippers of the self consider it to be death to discard the self. This is why they found the easiest thing to do is to give up talking

about it completely. I would like to speak to you about the carnal self today. Perhaps a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* will benefit from it. Allāh *taʿālā* has issued warnings against following the self and giving preference to it. At the same time, He promised Paradise for the one who does not act on the desires of his self. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in another place:

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

Here too Allāh *taʿālā* says that success and failure are attached to the carnal self. In other words, the one who rectified the self and purified it of evils, he is successful. The one who maintained it with its filth, he has failed.

This has been the work and achievement of the Sufis. In every era they removed people from the pride of the self and rescued them from destructive qualities. After

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1 Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

2 Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

all, the self is the worst enemy on the path to Allāh *taʿālā*. A Hadīth states:

إِنَّ أَعْدٰى عَدُوِّكَ نَفْسُكَ الَّتِيْ بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْكَ[1]

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Those who were seeking Allāh *taʿālā* listened to this warning of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* with the ears of their hearts, and became enemies of their carnal selves in consideration of this Hadīth. They fought against it with all their might until they overpowered it. Once they overpowered the self which was the obstacle on the path, the path to Allāh *taʿālā* became absolutely clear. Their spiritual condition with Allāh *taʿālā* and their affinity with Him became correct and complete.

The same carnal self made the creation the means for the acquisition of many of its desires. This is why the creation also became a major obstacle on the path. Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

اتصالك بالخالق بقدر انفصالك عن المخلوق

The strength of your bond with the Creator will depend on the extent of your distance from the creation.

Pieces of advice from Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī

The Sufis of every era strove arduously to save the seekers of the path from the creation and from evil characteristics. We present to you the teachings of

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٤، كتاب إعجاب القلوب. اتحاف السادة المتقين، ج ٨، ص ٣٧٥.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* to serve as an example. You will be able to gauge what the Tarīqat is and how the people of the Tarīqat of the past used to rectify those who frequented them – a practice which has disappeared from us. I have a hand-written book comprising themes of tasawwuf. Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* writes therein:

Yūsuf ibn Husayn relates: I went to Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī on one occasion and he said to me:

يا بني صحح حالك مع الله لا يشغلك عنه شاغل، ولا تشتعل بما يقول الخلق منك فإنهم لن يغنوا عنك من الله شيئا، وإذا صحت حالك مع الله أرشدك للطريق إليه.

O son! Set right your condition with Allāh, and nothing will be able to keep you away from Him. Do not become infuriated by anything which people say about you because they can be of no avail to you from Allāh taʿālā. If your affair with Allāh taʿālā comes right, He will steer you to the path which leads to Him.

The advice to stay away from false claims:

واقتد لسنة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وظاهر العمل، وإياك أن تدعي في ما ليس لك، فما أهلك عامة المريد إلا الدعاوى.

Follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, and practise on external knowledge. Beware of making claims about things which are not in you. This is because false claims have been the general reason for the destruction of murīds.

طلبت يوما من ذي النون وصيته قال إياك وهذه الأوراد المتصلة فإن النفس تألفها وانظر ما فيه مخالفة نفسك من صيام أو صدقة فاعملها فإن في متابعة النفس طاعة كانت أو معصية فتنة مما ألفت النفس شيئا إلا فيه بلاء وخطر.

Yūsuf ibn Husayn says: I asked Dhun Nūn for some advice. He said: Beware of the harms of these incantations because the carnal self is attracted to them. In other words, they are in line with the desires of the self. You should rather do the things which your self dislikes, e.g. fasting or charity. Following the desires of the self – whether in acts of obedience or disobedience – entails a tribulation. The self is only attracted to things which have the element of calamity and danger.

وقال له أيضا لا تسكن إلى مدح الناس ولا تجزع عن قبولهم وردهم فإنهم قطاع الطريق، واسكن إلى ما يتحققه من أحوالك سرًّا لا علنًا.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn also said to him: Never take solace from the praises of people (do not be happy over their praises). You should neither be terrified by their acceptance and rejection because they are highway robbers. You must take solace from your internal conditions which you really posses. And that too, only in your heart, not in public.

الخير كله في بيت مفتاحه التواضع، والشر كله في بيت مفتاحه الكبر.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn also said to him: When the key to a house is humility, you can conclude that every type of goodness has entered it. When the key to a house is

pride, you can conclude that every type of evil has entered it.

Glory to Allāh! What knowledge and what sciences! These were the real people of the Tarīqat. They neither went into detailed lectures, nor did they resort to eloquent words. They would merely make a few simple statements which used to get embedded in the hearts of the audience. This resulted in feeling uncomfortable with the creation and abhorring bad characteristics; and establishing an internal bond with the Creator.

An explanation of the words of advice of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī

The pieces of advice which Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* gave to Hadrat Yūsuf ibn Husayn *rahimahullāh* are worthy of being written in gold and being embedded in the hearts.

1. The first point which he made was that he should correct his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. Once he does this, nothing will be able to shift him from that. We learn from this that when people move away from the right path, the reason is that their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was not correct.

2. The second piece of advice was that he must never become infuriated by what people say about him because they can cause him no harm against Allāh *taʿālā*. What a beautiful piece of advice. Everyone has friends and enemies in this world. However, we see pious people having more opponents, and they have to hear many things from them. This would obviously cause them grief. Now look how he lightened the grief through this piece of advice! We notice that when a person has a strong bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, he does not bother in the least about the creation. This is because his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* is in order.

He seeks Allāh's pleasure alone. Once he acquires His pleasure, the enmity of people is of no consequence in his sight. He is – so to speak – saying what a poet said:

> Although the entire world has become my enemy, what I really need to know is that my Beloved is not angry at me.

3. The third piece of advice which Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* gave was that he must follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam,* practise on the external Sharī'at, and save himself from false claims. In other words, do not make claims about having certain internal spiritual conditions when you do not have them. It is false claims which have destroyed the murīds in general.

Since the seniors of Dīn gave this piece of advice, it will be necessary for us to understand the meaning of claims. I am not saying this, Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* is. He was from among the most senior Auliyā' of the past.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* was a unique personality of his time. Someone complained about him to Mutawakkil [the caliph]. He was summoned from Egypt. When he was presented in the court, he spoke to Mutawakkil and admonished him in such a manner that he began crying. Mutawakkil then conveyed him to Egypt with absolute respect and honour. Subsequently, when people of abstinence used to be mentioned in the presence of Mutawakkil, he would be reduced to tears. He used to say: "When the people of abstinence are mentioned in an

assembly, it is essential to make mention of Hadrat Dhun Nūn."[1]

The same Hadrat Dhun Nūn is saying that you must never make claims because it becomes a cause of destruction.

The following statement of Shaykh ʿAdīyy ibn Musāfir al-Umawī is quoted in *at-Tabaqāt al-Kubrā*:

أول ما يجب على سالك طريقتنا هذه ترك الدعاوى الكاذبة وإخفاء المعاني الصادقة.

The first thing which is obligatory on the one who is treading our path is to give up false claims and to conceal true meanings (i.e. his true conditions, proximity with Allāh taʿālā, love for Him, etc.).

Hadrat ʿAdīyy *rahimahullāh* is saying the same thing which Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* said. We learn from this that making false claims is very far from the path. It is therefore the first duty of a seeker to give them up, and then enter the path. Entering the path without giving them up is synonymous to entering salāh without purity.

The era is filled with false claims

Hadrat Shaykh Akbar *rahimahullāh* wrote a book titled *al-Amr al-Muhkam al-Marbūt Fī Mā Yalzam Ahl Tarīqillāh Taʿālā Min ash-Shurut* (the decisive and established order on the prerequisites which the people of the Tarīqat must adhere to). He writes in the introduction to this book: My objective in writing this book is to explain the rank of a shaykh and a murīd,

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[1] *Qushayrīyyah.*

and the essentials of both.” He goes on further to give the reason for it. He writes:

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه فيخرجه من رعونة نفسه وإعجابه برأيه ويعرب له عن طريق الحق، فالمريد يدعي شيخوخة الرياسة، وهذا كله تخبيط وتلبيس.[1]

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd by removing him from the deception of his carnal self and the arrogance of his views; and expound to him the true path. Consequently, the murīd makes claims to leadership and authority. All this has corrupted the Ṯarīqat and reduced it to a medley of confusion.

Look, Shaykh Akbar *raẖimahullāh* is also saying the same thing about his time – that it is filled with false claims. There is neither a genuine murīd nor an erudite shaykh. I ask you, if that was the condition of people of that time, do you think that all the shaykhs and murīds of today are true and genuine? Shaykh Akbar *raẖimahullāh* is saying that the times are filled with false claims. From that you can gauge the condition of our times. The fact of the matter is that everyone desires name and fame, and it is very difficult to reach a certain rank with genuine honesty. On the other hand, it is very easy to make false claims to positions and ranks. When honesty and sincerity left the people, it was replaced by false claims. In the

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٨.

absence of integrity, the goodness of honesty and the wretchedness of falsehood are no longer considered.

On the other hand, if a person just took into consideration the following words of Allāh *taʿālā* and statement of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, he would have realized that honesty is what saves a man, and dishonesty is what destroys him.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَكُوْنُوْا مَعَ الصَّادِقِيْنَ.

O believers! Fear Allāh and remain with the truthful ones.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

عليكم بالصدق فإن الصدق ينجي والكذب يهلك.[1]

Hold on firmly to honesty because honesty protects a person while dishonesty destroys him.

The Sufis warn against false claims in order to save people from destruction. However, it is not an easy station, and it is no play to give up desires and pleasures. This is why the Sufis continue speaking against it and people too continue getting caught up with it. The basis for the warnings of the Sufis are the very texts which are quoted above. However, people do not pay heed. This is why all that we see today is people making claims, and no one can say anything to anyone. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* and complain to Him alone.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج٤، ص ٣٤٤.

4. The next piece of advice of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* is for him to abstain from incantations. This refers to the incantations (wazīfahs) taught by a shaykh. He is advising him against becoming too engrossed with them and from having false hopes in their effects. I explained this advice of Hadrat Shaykh because the words *iyyāka wa hādhihil awrād* (Beware of the harms of these incantations) are similar to when you say to someone: *iyyāka wa at-tarīq* (beware of the path). What this means is that now that you are on the path, the danger of falling and slipping is there, so you must be wary of the dangers. It is not intended to remove the person from the path, but to warn him of its dangers. In the same way, when he said that he must beware of incantations, it meant that: Generally there can be two errors in this regard. One is when a person adheres so strictly to them to the extent that he does not show as much importance to the fard and wājib actions. He gives preference to incantations over the obligations. The evil of this is obvious. The other is that it smacks of pride, haughtiness and claims. Consequently, we see that when people start occupying themselves in wazīfahs, a type of pride over their worship develops within them and they begin to look down on those who do not read wazīfahs. This is most evil because it is a cause of destruction for a seeker. The following couplet applies to a person of this nature:

> The proud ascetic could not traverse the path safely, while a free-thinker reached Paradise through his submission and humility.

Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* then explains the reason himself. He says that the carnal self is pleased with these things, and the result could be

boastfulness. You should therefore do things which are against the self, viz. the acts of worship prescribed by the Sharīʿat, e.g. s̲alāh, fasting, charity and so on. This is because falling into tribulation is certain when the self is obeyed – whether in acts of obedience or disobedience. After all, the self loves the thing which is dangerous to the self and a tribulation for it. And the tribulation of disobedience is well known and obvious. However, the obedience from which the carnal self takes a share – that too is a tribulation for the seeker because when the objective of obedience has been achieved, it is most certainly a tribulation for him. The person thinks that he did an act of obedience, but it is not accepted by Allāh *taʿālā* because the carnal self took a share of it. In the meantime, the person's share was nothing but fatigue and difficulty.

When H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn *rah̲imahullāh* advised his disciple to save himself from incantations, then while the obvious reason was because this results in pride and haughtiness, the other reason is that fulfilling them generally results in the waning of sincerity. People's focus is only on completing the prescribed number. This is what I am observing in our times. Very few of those who engage in Allāh's dhikr really have the intention of gaining proximity to Him and establishing a bond with him. The majority of them are more focussed on completing the prescribed number because they have made this the objective. In other words, they treat the waz̲īfahs prescribed by the shaykh like a prescription written by a doctor. A prescription contains the names of medicines, the dosage, times when the medicine is to be taken, etc. If there are any shortcomings in following the prescription strictly, then the desired benefit of those medicines is not acquired. In the same way, sincerity has been left one side, and people are restricting

themselves to the prescribed number. It is obviously a serious misguidance and deviation. This is what Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* wants to stop his disciple from. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* looks at a person's sincerity and devotion; He does not look at the number.

A person commented with regard to a poetry collection of a certain poet in which he wrote in praise of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: "If just one couplet of this entire collection is accepted in the court of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the person would have realized his objective."

When I heard this comment, I thought to myself: Look at how he values honesty and sincerity. However, people are generally not bothered about these qualities. Acceptance and rejection have become equal in our circles. You must have heard the statement of the Sufis that a perfect person is the one who considers the acceptance and rejection of people to be the same. [In other words, he is not bothered if people accept him or reject him]. This can be correct, but every acceptance and rejection is not praiseworthy. Praiseworthy is what is with respect to the creation. That is, the person is not bothered whether people accept or reject him. As for Allāh *taʿālā*, it is only acceptance which is praiseworthy; His rejection is most disliked.

This is why we have to have this concern that the wazīfahs and incantations which we are engaging in must be accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. And the way of achieving this is to fulfil them with sincerity. After that, it may well be that the duʿā' or dhikr of just one occasion will be accepted and the person would have achieved his objective. It can also happen that a person repeats a dhikr 100 000 times or occupies

himself in it for the entire day, but it has no value in the sight of Allāh *ta'ālā* because there was no sincerity or because the person was heedless. We seek refuge in Allāh *ta'ālā*.

The meaning of sincerity

Since we are speaking about sincerity, I think we ought to explain it a bit. This is an era of ignorance and people no longer have knowledge of these things. The situation is so bad that they do not even know the reality of things which they have been doing repeatedly. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* explains sincerity in his *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*:

ومنها الإخلاص هو أن يتمثل في عقله نفع العبادة لله تعالى من جهة قرب نفسه من الحق كما قال تبارك وتعالى: "إن رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين". أو من جهة تصديق ما وعد الله تعالى على السنة رسله من ثواب الآخرة فينشأ منه الأعمال بداعية عظيمة لا يشوبها رياء ولا سمعة ولا موافقة عاده ويصحب هذا الحال على جميع أعماله حتى الأعمال المباحة العادية، قال الله تعالى: "ومآ أمروا إلا ليعبدوا الله مخلصين له الدين". وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات.[1]

Ikhlās means that the benefit of worship for Allāh ta'ālā be present in a person's mind. This benefit could be that because of it, the proximity to Allāh ta'ālā which he acquires comes before him. As Allāh ta'ālā Himself said: "Surely Allāh's mercy is near the doers of good."

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[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ٢، ص ٩٢.

Alternatively, it could be because the person fully affirms the reward which Allāh taʿālā promised in the Hereafter via His Messengers. Consequently, the person carries out actions with intense devotion which is not tainted by ostentation, causing people to hear about it, nor in fulfilment of a custom. This condition then accompanies all his actions, even those which are merely permissible and habitual. Allāh taʿālā says: "They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone]." Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "All actions are dependent on intentions."

Look at what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying: Ikhlās means that when a person does an action for Allāh *taʿālā*, he envisages its benefit in his mind. And what is that benefit? When he does the worship, his mind must rationally perceive closeness with Allāh *taʿālā*. In other words, he must feel that he is getting close to Allāh *taʿālā*. This theme is to be found in the verse in which Allāh *taʿālā* says: Surely Allāh's mercy is close to those who do good.

The other way of perceiving the benefit is for a person to experience full affirmation in his heart of the promises of reward which Allāh *taʿālā* made via the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. In other words, when he does the worship, his heart must have full conviction that he will most certainly receive the rewards as promised by Allāh *taʿālā* via the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*.

If either of the two is found in the heart – i.e. proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* or conviction in Allāh's promises – the action will be carried out with such earnestness that it will not be tainted in the least by any ostentation, showing off, or following of baseless customs. This is an obvious result because when the

benefit of proximity with Allāh *taʿālā* and belief in reward settle in the heart of a believer, why should he disregard these lofty ideals for base and ignoble objectives like ostentation, showing off, and baseless customs!?

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look how beautifully Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained the statement of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*. In addition to embedding it in our hearts, we ought to proliferate and propagate it because there is general ignorance about the subject of sincerity and other related subjects. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

THE REASON FOR OUR DĪNĪ RETROGRESSION (2)

Ikhlā<u>s</u> is that element which is deeply embedded in the heart of a believer which – with a firm resoluteness – becomes a catalyst for a particular action and for the repetition of that action. When ikhlā<u>s</u> settles in the heart of a believer, he severely abhors ostentation, showing off, and so on. This is because these are creations while he has established a firm bond with the Creator. When a heart has developed the sole objective of pleasing the Creator, why should it ever think of the creation!?

When a person engages in dhikr and acts of obedience with sincerity, his objective becomes the quality of the obedience and not its quantity. And when a person's objective is quantity and not quality (sincerity and yearning), you can well imagine how far away he is from the path. This is why we see that those who follow customs have this objective [of quantity and not quality]. These follies were committed in the past as well. This is why <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Dhun Nūn Mi<u>s</u>rī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "Save yourself from these incantations". In other words, do not focus on merely uttering them verbally and completing the prescribed number because this negates sincerity. Instead, carry out the different wa<u>z</u>īfahs and incantations with sincerity and for Allāh's pleasure. Whether they are many or few in number, sincerity is essential. Understand this well.

The two levels of ikhlās

As per the statement of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, ikhlās refers to the urge which develops in the heart of a person after envisaging the closeness of Allāh *taʿālā* in the heart or having conviction in the reward which is promised in the Hereafter. It prompts a person towards action and gives him the enthusiasm to carry out the action again. I will explain an example in this regard.

People go to the Sufis and choose to be in their company. Subsequently, a seeker develops a desire to tread the path either after his first visit or after several visits. The Sufis refer to this desire or enthusiasm as a *hāl* (a spiritual condition). Consequently, the seeker's frequenting of the shaykh, his dhikr and other acts of obedience are now carried out under a special type of emotion and feeling. He perceives sweetness and enjoyment in obedience and an abhorrence for disobedience. This condition is known as ikhlās. Once ikhlās is realized, the condition of his heart causes all his acts of worship to be carried out correctly. The Sufis pay particular attention to creating this condition in a seeker. This was the tasawwuf of the past. Unfortunately, today there are many superficial things but the actual soul of all – ikhlās – is not to be found. People are certainly frequenting the Sufis, and the system of shaykh/murīd is also continuing; but ikhlās has disappeared. In the present situation, my heart desires to quote this couplet:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The following couplet will also apply to such people:

> He looked here and he looked there. He looked at him and he looked at her, but he did not look at the Beloved. If he looked at others, then what did he really see?

Note: In other words, he ought to turn his gaze away from others and focus his gaze on the Beloved. This is ikhlās. O Allāh bless us with this quality. Āmīn. (compiler)

Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* gave another piece of advice to Yūsuf ibn Husayn *rahimahullāh*. It is undoubtedly a most beautiful advice, viz. do not pay attention to the praises of people and do not acquire internal happiness and joy from their praises. Furthermore, do not be affected by the approval and rejection of people. You should rather keep your relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* in order and be worried about not doing anything against Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. As for whether people accept or reject you, do not bother in the least about it. On occasions of this nature, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Sāhib Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following couplet from the *Būstān*. Because it was a reflection of the spiritual condition of Hadrat himself, he used to read it with much emotion. The audience too would enjoy listening to it. It is undoubtedly a beautiful couplet:

> These people do not even expect any acceptance and approval from the creation because they are accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. This is enough for them.

They are intoxicated in these thoughts and thereafter do not turn their gazes to the creation – whether they consider them to be good or bad, whether they accept them or not. Some people published pamphlets and posters against Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

rahimahullāh. When a person in ʿAlīgarh saw them, he thought to himself that Hadrat must be greatly disturbed and saddened by them, and is probably completely incapacitated. Out of his concern he travelled to Thānah Bhawan and noticed that Hadrat is absolutely happy, jolly and cheerful. He was very surprised and expressed his thoughts to Hadrat. Hadrat said: "Brother! Why should I be disturbed? What harm did it cause me? On the contrary, I see some benefit in it. There can be only two benefits, worldly and Dīnī. The Dīnī benefit is that I do not have any good actions of my own. The people who are speaking ill of me today will have their good deeds given to me on the day of Resurrection. The worldly benefit is that my income has increased. The gifts and presents which people used to send to me previously have now increased in number. Since I have suffered no loss at all, why should I be grieved?" The man realized that Hadrat Maulānā is focussed on a totally different treasure which is causing him to not bother in the least about who is saying what.

People are highway robbers

Hadrat Dhun Nūn *rahimahullāh* says further: Do not be bothered by the acceptance and rejection of people because they are highway robbers. If you are going to turn your attention to what they say, you will become engrossed with them and your path will become obscure. This is why you ought to stay far from them and from their statements.

Look! Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* is referring to the laity as highway robbers. Normally, an ignorant shaykh who has no knowledge of the Tarīqat, who assumes the position of a shaykh and leads people astray is referred to as a highway robber. However, from his statement we learn that just as a

shaykh is sometimes a highway robber, minor disciples and the ignoramuses prove to be highway robbers with respect to a shaykh.

An ostentatious worshipper

The *Gulistān* relates the story of a worshipper. He kept aloof from people and began living in a forest. He used to live by eating the leaves of trees. The king went to visit him one day and requested: "If Hadrat feels it appropriate, Hadrat can permit me to make arrangements for a place for Hadrat in the city. Hadrat can live there. It is hoped that Hadrat will be able to engage in even more worship there and remain more focussed. Another benefit will be that more people will have the opportunity of benefiting from Hadrat's sanctified company. People will observe your righteous actions and emulate you."

The worshipper did not approve of this request from the king and turned his face away from him. One of the ministers who was with the king said: "We have to consider the request of the king. What harm is there if Hadrat came to the city for a few days and inspected the place which is arranged for Hadrat? If, in Hadrat's pure and beloved time, Hadrat experiences any discomfort and uneasiness in the company of outsiders, Hadrat can certainly leave and come back here."

People say that the worshipper was somewhat satisfied by the explanation of the minister. I say, he was not satisfied by the explanation; rather he got trapped by his sweet words. He was a defective worshipper so he could not safeguard himself.

He accompanied the king to the city. A royal palace and a special garden were chosen for his stay. It was a most attractive and comforting place. At the same

time, the king appointed a most beautiful young lady and a handsome young boy to attend to him. The worshipper began eating the exotic and elaborately prepared foods, wearing classy and exclusive clothes, eating various types of fruit and applying expensive perfumes. He began enjoying all these things thoroughly. He also observed the beauty of the young boy and woman. The sages say: The hair-locks of beautiful people are the fetters for the feet of the intelligence, and very cunning traps. Consequently, he became attracted to them and whatever spiritual treasures he had were all taken away from him. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* relates further about him but the objective of relating this incident is to demonstrate to you that those who frequent the saints sometimes prove to be highway robbers for them. Look at this dervish who was living quite well in solitude, but the carnal self and Shay<u>t</u>ān destroyed him. Those who came to him tempted him and got him trapped in desires of the carnal self. When man receives things which were liked by his self and he becomes engrossed in them, it becomes very difficult to save himself. Only a qualified shaykh and a person who is inspired by Allāh *taʿālā* can be saved.

After observing similar conditions, Shaykh Akbar *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said:

قد رأينا شيوخا سقطوا

We personally saw several Sufis falling from grace.

From the story of the ostentatious worshipper we learn that a shaykh must not listen to everything which someone says to him, even if it is from his murīd. A murīd is deficient himself and he will say

anything and everything. It is the duty of the shaykh to ponder over what he says and his own conditions, and think whether it will cause any worldly or Dīnī harm to him. If he sees the slightest taint of harm, he must never do it. This is how the saint [in the above story] slipped. He did not look at the condition of his self. He did not gauge its weakness and strength. Although he refused the king's request, he gave in to the request of the minister. We also learn from this that the saint was not genuine in his refusal to the king. His refusal was also based on ostentation and pretension. After all, why did he change his stand?

The other lesson which we learn is that worldly people are very far from the lives of the saints, but they are fully aware of their terminologies and interests. They adopt an approach which causes the saint to misjudge and think that they are fully aware of the path, and include them among their followers. While in reality they are strangers and highway robbers. Look at some of the words which the minister used: "Hadrat's pure and beloved time, Hadrat experiences any discomfort and uneasiness in the company of outsiders". These are words which are related to the saints. This is why he was deceived and thought to himself: "he likes my pure and beloved time and he dislikes the discomfort which I could experience in the company of outsiders". Thus, he considered him to be a sincere advisor and got carried away by his words.

Although the minister became the cause, the actual defect was in the worshipper himself, and this is why he slipped. We can gauge from this that he was not sincere and genuine from the very beginning because Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow His sincere servants to be destroyed. He was ostentatious, and so the blessing of it manifested itself accordingly.

My heart feels like relating the remainder of the story of the ostentatious worshipper so that we may learn the reason for his downfall. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says that after a few days, the king developed a desire to visit the worshipper so he went to him. He noticed that the worshipper's condition was not as it was before. In fact, he had changed completely. His complexion changed towards a reddish and fair complexion, and he had picked up quite a bit of weight. He was lying down with a pillow under his head, while a slave was fanning him with peacock feathers. The king was happy to see his peaceful condition. They then spoke on various subjects. The king eventually said to him: "The love which I have for the ʿulamā' and Sufis is unsurpassed. I don't think I love any other group more than these two groups." A well-travelled and experienced minister had accompanied the king. (It could be the same minister whose request the worshipper had acceded to and been deluded by). When he realized that the internal spiritual condition of the worshipper has been taken away, and that the king is overjoyed merely by looking at his external condition, he said: "O honourable king! The prerequisite of friendship is that you have good relations with both groups [ʿulamā' and Sufis]. You should do this by giving wealth to the ʿulamā' so that others will develop the zeal to acquire knowledge and they too will acquire it. As for the worshippers, you should give them nothing so that they remain firm on their abstinence."

Did you see! It is more difficult to preserve one's spiritual condition than acquiring it. If there are shortcomings in its preservation, not only the murīd but even the shaykh will falter and fall. This is why the erudite Sufis advised their murīds to abstain from things which could result in their downfall. The

author of *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* has devoted a chapter on advice to the murīd. He writes:

ومن شأن المريد التباعد عن أبناء الدنيا، فإن صحبتهم سم مجرب، لأنهم ينتفعون به وهو ينتقص بهم، قال الله تعالى: ولا تطع من اغفلنا قلبه عن ذكرنا.[1]

It is the mark of a murīd to remain aloof from worldly people because their company is a tried and tested poison. They will certainly derive some benefit from him, but the murīd will lose his identity. Allāh taʿālā says: Do not obey the one whose heart We made heedless of Our remembrance.

This clearly states that a murīd must stay away from worldly people. They are outsiders and their company is a toxic poison. Here too the cause of the harm is the weakness in the murīd himself. When he intermingles with worldly people, his intention becomes adulterated and he too becomes a worldly person. As for worldly people, they meet him because of his religiosity, they certainly benefit from him. But a deficient murīd experiences harm because he falls from his position, and he falls from grace in the eyes of the Creator and the creation.

The reasons why Sufis falter and fall

At this point you must understand that there are different reasons for the downfall of a Sufi. The following is stated in *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*:

Whatever a person has acquired is lost because of: (1) his showing no importance to it in the sense that he

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[1] رسالة قشيرية، ص ٢٠٣.

does not safeguard and preserve it, (2) the misfortune of committing sin, (3) expansion and diversity in food. If after examination, he realizes that it is the third reason, he must exercise caution and restraint. If it is the second reason, he must seek forgiveness and desist. If it is the first reason, he must beseech Allāh *taʿālā*, express his submission and servitude in His court, and reprimand his self for its heedlessness. This is the treatment in a gist. No matter what, excessive seeking of forgiveness and remorse are essential.[1]

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the reasons for a Sufi's downfall as explained by Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Sāhib Gangohī *rahimahullāh*. Every seeker on the path – whether a shaykh or a murīd – ought to imprint these in his heart. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Falling from grace

Look! The Sufis have also explained the causes of downfall by saying these are the reasons why even a shaykh can fall from his position. I now ask you, are these causes only for a shaykh and not for a murīd? Are all the murīds perfect? Were these points for people of the past only, and not for the people of our times? If we examine the conditions, we can conclude that the Tarīqat does not really exist today. How many people do you really see entering this path? Therefore, if you take it in this sense and say that the murīds do not falter and fall, you could be right because for someone to fall, he has to enter into it first. If a person has not even entered the path, how will he ever fall? Anyway, those who do enter the path, inevitably fall

[1] *Makātīb Rashīdīyyah*, p. 39.

either in the beginning, in the middle or towards the end. The experts consider such people to have left the path even though they may consider themselves to be on it.

From the above statements of the Sufis you learnt that the shaykh and the murīd can falter and fall. The reason is that the fall is due to certain causes, and whoever chooses a cause, he will experience its result and outcome. From the story which we quoted from the *Gulistān* we learn about how a shaykh fell from grace. And from the explanation in *Risālah Qushayrīyyah* we learnt about a murīd – the company of worldly people is a toxic poison for him.

Giving up wealth and position is essential in the path

ʿAllāmah Qushayrī *rahimahullāh* says that it is obligatory on a seeker to cast aside wealth and position. He says that these things are also toxic poisons for him. In other words, we could say that wealth and position are also highway robbers for a seeker. He writes:

إذا أراد الخروج عن العلائق فأولها الخروج عن المال...فإذا خرج عن المال فالواجب عليه الخروح عن الجاه، فإن ملاحظة الجاه تقطعة عظيمة، وما لم يستو عند المريد قبول الخلق وردهم لا يجئ منه شيء، بل أضر الأشياء له ملاحظة الناس إياه بعين الإثبات والتبرك به لإفلاس

الناس عن هذا الحديث، وهو يعد لم يصحح إلا لإرادة فكيف يصح أن يتبرك به فخروجهم من الجاه واجب عليهم لأن ذلك سم قاتل لهم.[1]

If a seeker wants to sever contacts and ties, he must first extricate himself from wealth. Once he does that, it becomes obligatory on him to extricate himself from position. The reason for this is that the love for position is also a dangerous highway robber. As long as a murīd does not consider the approval and rejection of people to be equal, he cannot achieve anything. Instead, the most dangerous thing for him is when people look at him as a source of blessings and consider him to be blessed. This is because the people are ignorant about these internal matters. They merely look at a person externally and consider him to be a saint, while he has not even rectified his intent as yet. How, then, can it be correct to consider him to be blessed? It is obligatory for a seeker to extricate himself from the love of position because it is a toxic poison for him.

Look! He is saying that it is obligatory on a murīd to come out of the love for position because it is also a highway robber. As long as the approval and rejection of people is not the same in the eyes of a seeker, he cannot achieve anything. This is the same piece of advice which you just heard from the statement of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh.*

He says further on that the most dangerous thing for a seeker is when people think that he has reached a level of perfection, and due to which they consider him to be a source of blessings. The masses are ignorant

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[1] رسالة قشيرية، ص ١٩٩.

about internal matters. They do not know what is love for position and what its harms are. Thus, if a seeker is caught up in this evil characteristic while his intention is not even correct, then how can it be permissible to look at him as a source of blessings?

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* defines ostentation as follows:

هو طلب الجاه بواسطة العبادات

It entails seeking rank and position through acts of worship.

According to this definition, a seeker of position is an ostentatious person. He is not sincere, he is a polytheist because a Hadīth refers to ostentation as subtle polytheism. If a person is so far from the path, how can he ever be considered to be on the path. In fact, it will be most astonishing to believe that he is a source of blessings and eligible for reverence. This is what corrupts the path. Nowadays it is observed that people of this nature are at the helm of tasawwuf, while, according to the Sufis – in fact, in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* – they have not acquired even a miniscule share of it.

Therefore the most essential thing for a seeker is to extricate himself from unnecessary ties and bonds. This is because the structure of the Tarīqat is founded on emptying the heart. The heart which contains anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* – whether it is love for wealth or desire for name and fame – cannot establish a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. A poet says:

> If you desire Allāh *taʿālā* together with this
> base and vile world, then understand that
> this thought is impossible and madness.

Another poet says:

> Unnecessary relationships are obstacles and causes of deprivation. Once you sever them, you will reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

In short, bearing in mind that the love for position, wealth, etc. are destructive to man, the Sufis and murīds who fall from grace do so because of this. It will be correct to say the following:

من هنا سقط من المشائخ والمريدين

It is from here that the Sufis and murīds fall.

The way to save one's self from falling

Since we are speaking about the fall of the shaykh and murīd and we explained the causes for it, I think it will be necessary to speak about the way to save one's self from falling. Now listen in this regard:

While on the subject of the etiquette which a shaykh must follow, the author of *Tars̱īʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* writes:

لا بد للشيخ أيضا من وقت مع ربه

A shaykh must have some time for himself when he is in solitude with Allāh taʿālā.

This means that he must pay particular attention to solitude. In other words, just as he progressed from a novice on account of his hours of solitude, he must not forget and discard this practice. After all, the self acquired strength in its affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* through this practice. Therefore, if he discards it, his self will return towards its original condition. The author of *Tars̱īʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* explains the same reason for the importance of solitude. He writes:

وذلك أن النفس إنما حصلت لها القوة باستمرار العادة في الحضور مع الحق سبحانه وتعالى وترك ما سواه في الظاهر والباطن، فإذا ترك الحضور رجعت النفس لطبيعتها وعادتها، فإن ما لم تنفطر النفس عليه سريع الذهاب ومتى لم يتفقد الشيخ حاله في كل يوم بالأمر الذي حصل له هذا التمكين كان مخدوعا فتفقد الأنس ويجد الوحشة.

The self received strength by continuing in its practice of presence with Allāh taʿālā and discarding all that is apart from him internally and externally. If the person gives up this practice, the self will return to its original temperament and habit. When a condition is not natural to the self – and is temporary and acquired – it disappears very quickly. When a shaykh does not constantly examine his condition with respect to the matters through which he reached this level of expertise, then understand that he is deceived. He will lose the affinity and experience detachment.

We learn from the above that even a shaykh – after having qualified as one – has to continually check and evaluate his condition. In other words, he must continually choose those causes through which he reached his level of erudition. He must not allow any relapse in this regard. It may well happen that after becoming a shaykh, he may display shortcomings in these matters. If he allows this to continue, he will gradually fall from the path. If this is the case, we can see how important continuous evaluation is. This is why the saints continue their spiritual exercises even after qualification. Someone asked Hadrat Junayd *rahimahullāh*: "You have already reached Allāh *taʿālā*, why do you still engage in dhikr?" He replied: "How

can I leave the thing through which I reached this level?”

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful reply which serves as an admonition for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* relates an incident in *Ihyā’ al-ʿUlūm*. When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was going to Mt. Tūr, he passed by a rock which was crying profusely. When he asked it the reason for crying, it replied: “I heard that Allāh *taʿālā* said with reference to the Hell-fire:

وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

Its fuel will be people and rocks.

I fear that I might be its fuel. You are going to meet Allāh *taʿālā* so you must intercede in my favour for salvation from the Hell-fire.”

When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* went to the mountain, he forgot the request of the rock because he was thoroughly enjoying his conversation with Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* Himself reminded him by asking: “Have you brought any message from anyone?” He replied: “Yes. I came across a rock which was crying and it said such and such things.” Allāh *taʿālā* said: “You must say to it that by virtue of its crying and fear, I have excluded it from becoming the fuel of the Hell-fire.” On his return, Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* conveyed the good news to the rock. After some days he happened to pass by that place and found the rock crying. He asked: “Now what is the reason for your crying?” You have been saved from the Hell-fire.” The rock replied: “How can I give up the crying on account of which I was given salvation!?”

We learn from these incidents that when a person receives a certain type of treasure through a certain means, then in addition to valuing the treasure, he must value and appreciate the means which enabled him to acquire it. In the same way, a qualified shaykh continually evaluates his condition and completes his daily wa**z**īfahs and different forms of dhikr. This is why it is said that if a shaykh does not take stock of himself in the light of the spiritual practices through which he reached the level of qualification, you can conclude that he has fallen into deception. Nowadays we observe that not only the murīd but even the shaykh pays no important to this. A shaykh has to practise on the following principle:

لا بد للشيخ أيضا من وقت مع ربه

A shaykh must have some time for himself when he is in solitude with Allāh taʿālā.

When the murīd gets his shaykh occupied and busy with him [the murīd], he becomes a cause for the spiritual treasure of the shaykh to be taken away. This is what the author of *Tarṣīʿ* is saying:

من هذا المكان سقط من سقط من الشيوخ

It is from this position that we saw many Sufis falling.

And regarding whom Shaykh Akbar *ra**h**imahullāh* said:

قد رأينا شيوخا سقطوا

We saw many Sufis falling.

Murīds assembling and crowding around a shaykh, and devoting themselves to him is most dangerous for the shaykh. It is undoubtedly a major test and

tribulation for him. It is a most difficult pass on the path from which he cannot leave if he does not have sincerity and devotion. It becomes very difficult to maintain a correct intention in situations of this nature. It is because of the adulteration of his intention that a person falls into self-centredness and egotism. This is why the esteemed and senior Sufis of every era considered the creation to be a tribulation. They saved themselves from it and paid due attention to saving their murīds as well.

The fundamental objective of sulūk

Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm *rahimahullāh* is the distinguished son and khalīfah of Imām Rabbānī Hadrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *rahimahullāh*. He writes in his *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*:

> Becoming a shaykh and inducting murīds is not the objective of sulūk. Rather, it is to fulfil the duties of servitude in such a way that the interference and opposition of the self does not remain.
>
> In other words, it entails acquiring obliteration and anonymity, and removing the rebelliousness and conceit of the self. This is because the acquisition of cognition is connected to this.
>
> If this is the case, the person who reverts to such a person and expresses his bond with him, then it is as though he is diverting him from Allāh *taʿālā* and occupying him with himself. As for the one who does not revert to him, he is giving him an opportunity to continue in his focus with Allāh *taʿālā*. He must therefore be grateful to him.

> O Allāh! Make me totally aloof from the creation in such a manner that they do not even turn towards me. Make me independent of the entire world, and turn my heart away from everyone. Make me focussed on Your love all the time. Was salām.[1]

Look at how Hadrat Khwājah Muhammad Maʿsūm *rahimahullāh* is writing to his disciple. It seems that he too complained about his lack of reverting to his shaykh. This is when Hadrat explained to him the difference between the objective and non-objective. He then removed him from that pass which could have become a tribulation for him. While it is a difficult pass, the true servants of Allāh *taʿālā* have passed through it, and did not allow highway robbers to cause their journey to be disrupted.

Similarly, I just explained to you that love for wealth and position sometimes causes a person to lose the path. Therefore, it will not be wrong to refer to these two and all other evils of the self which can cause a seeker to fall as highway robbers. We learn from this that when the Sufis focussed on the carnal self as the object of rectification, they were totally correct. Unfortunately, the subject of the carnal self has been disregarded today. The masses are anyway the masses, I am surprised at the scholars and elite who have given up this discussion completely. To Allāh *taʿālā* we belong and to Him is our return.

I believe that these people have not forgotten this subject but are wilfully disregarding it because it is most difficult for worshippers of the carnal self to give

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[1] *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah.*

up the pleasures of the self for the sake of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why it has been removed and expelled from the taṣawwuf of today, whereas this was the basis of taṣawwuf. Now people have come down to just a few customs. In fact, this has been the situation for quite some time. Sayyidunā Shaykh Aḥmad Kabīr Rifāʿī *raḥimahullāh* writes about the Sufis of his time:

> O Sufi! What foolishness is this! Become a Sufi first so that we too can call you a Sufi. My beloved! Do you think that this Ṭarīqat is your inheritance from your forefathers? Do you think it has come down from your forefathers? Do you think you will get it just because you have the name Bakr and ʿUmar? Do you think it will just come into your lineage? Do you think it will become embedded in your garments just like that? Do you think this Ṭarīqat is made up of a woollen garment, a coat, a walking stick, and sack and a large turban? Do you think you must only have the outward appearance of the saints? Certainly not. I take an oath and say that Allāh *taʿālā* does not look at these things. He looks at your heart. How can the mysteries of Allāh *taʿālā* and the blessings of His proximity be placed in you when you are entrapped in the barriers of a coat, tasbīḥ, walking stick and sack; and you are heedless of Allāh *taʿālā*?! Of what benefit is this intellect when it is devoid of Allāh-recognition? Of what benefit is this head when it is devoid of brains? O you poor fellow! You haven't done the work which is done by this group [of genuine Sufis] yet you are wearing their clothes!? My dear

> one! Had you subdued your heart and worn the garment of fear, and embellished your outward garments with the garment of good character, made your carnal self wear the garment of submission, and your ego the garment of self-obliteration, and your tongue the garment of dhikr, and escaped from all the obstacles which you are entrapped in, and then wore this garment, it would have been better for you.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the powerful admonition of Hadrat Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* to the Sufis of his time. Every Sufi ought to read it periodically and take a stock of his conditions so that he becomes a Sufi in the true sense of the word. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

He says further on:

> O you poor fellow! You are presently acting according to your wishes. You are traversing the path through your own thinking. You are walking with your lies, pride and deception. You are carrying the impurities of egotism and pride, and you are thinking that you are somebody. How can this be? In the presence of pride, you cannot take even a single step in this path. Acquire the knowledge of humility, learn the lesson of perplexity, and acquire the knowledge of submission and servitude. (Only then can you reach a certain level).

Look at how Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* takes ignorant Sufis to account! They are the ones who adopted the customs of the Sufis but disregarded the reality of tasawwuf. It has been the work of the genuine Sufis of every era to remove people from

baseless customs and call them towards the reality. The same Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* puts an end to the mutual disputes of the ʿulamā' and Sufis by saying:

> The <u>T</u>arīqat is the Sharīʿat and the Sharīʿat is the <u>T</u>arīqat. The only difference between the two is in words. The basis, objective and result of both is the same. I believe that the Sufi who criticizes the jurist is certainly eligible for divine punishment, and the jurist who criticizes the Sufi is eligible for the same punishment. Yes, if a scholar issues orders from his own self and does not explain the Sharīʿat, or a Sufi traverses the path on his own without treading according to the Sharīʿat, then neither of the two will be sinning if they criticize each other.

He writes further on:

> What will a Sufi do when a scholar asks him: Can you say to your murīds: "Don't perform <u>s</u>alāh, do not keep fast, do not abstain from sins, do not remain on the limits set by Allāh *taʿālā*?" Can he give a reply other than: "Never, Allāh forbid! We seek refuge in Allāh"?
>
> In the same way, what will a jurist say if a Sufi says to him: Can you say to your students: "Do not engage in a lot of dhikr of Allāh *taʿālā*. Do not fight your carnal self through spiritual striving. Do not try to acquire genuine sincerity for Allāh's sake." Can the jurist respond in any way apart from saying: "Never, Allāh forbid! We seek refuge in Allāh"?

> We can conclude from this that the basis, objective and result of both is the same. It is only a matter of different words.

(In other words, both concur on the obligation of s̲alāh, zakāh, fasting, etc. and the prohibition of sins. In the same way, both concur on the need for Allāh's remembrance, opposing the carnal self, and the acquisition of sincerity. The only difference is that fulfilling the obligations of s̲alāh, fasting, etc. and abstaining from sins has been termed the Sharīʿat by people, and abundant dhikr, opposition of the carnal self, acquisition of sincerity, etc. is known as tas̲awwuf. However, the changing of names does not change the reality.)

> Thus, if the veil of words prevent a Sufi from understanding the fundamental and the objective, then he is an ignorant person. And Allāh *taʿālā* never made any ignorant person into His walī (special friend). If the veil of words prevents a jurist from understanding this reality, then he too is deprived. O Allāh! I seek refuge in You from knowledge which is not beneficial.[1]

Genuine and real tas̲awwuf

Did you see! This is real tas̲awwuf and these were the genuine Sufis who presented genuine and correct teachings, and kept the Dīn pure from what was not Dīn. The misguidance and deviation which we see today is because there is no one to show the correct way. There is no one to reprimand the mashā'ikh and

[1] *Al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 158.

their murīds for their shortcomings. This was not the situation in the past. Rather there were erudite Sufis who combined the Sharīʿat and the Ṯarīqat. They used to rectify and correct the ʿulamā' and the Sufis because these are the sources of deviation. After all:

زلة العالِم زلة العالَم

When an ʿālim falters, the world falters because of him.

In the same way, if a shaykh slips and falls because he did not adhere to the etiquette of the path, he will be a tribulation for the murīd.

You just now heard the words of Sayyidunā Rifāʿī *raẖimahullāh* and how he castigated the superficial Sufis. He did this so that people do not fall into misguidance and are saved from the highway robbers. Reformers of every era undertook this task. Imām Ghazzālī *raẖimahullāh* severely reprimanded such people and labelled most of the Sufis of his era as superficial Sufis. He writes on the etiquette of a journey in his *Iẖyā' al-ʿUlūm*:

Etiquette of a journey

The internal selves of the majority of the pseudo-Sufis (they are not genuine Sufis but have adopted the external appearance of Sufis) of today are devoid of the intricacies of internal reflection and actions. They have no affinity whatsoever with remembrance of Allāh *taʿālā* in solitude. Moreover, they are lazy and idle. They have no work and no occupation. This is why begging has become attractive to their temperament. They find it very difficult to work, and easy to go around begging from people. They are attracted to the traveller's lodges which have been constructed in the towns and cities for normal travellers. They also trap those attendants who are at

the service of genuine Sufis and compel them to serve them, while they themselves belittle their Dīn and intelligence. This is because their serving of the public is solely for show and ostentation, so that they become popular, and by attracting a large following, they can acquire wealth from the people by asking them for it.

When jokers of this nature cannot exercise any authority in the khānqāhs, when their discipline cannot benefit the murīds, and their reprimanding does not have enough power to stop people from evils; they adopt the garments of Sufis and provide the means for entertainment in the khānqāhs. Consequently, the khānqāh becomes a place of entertainment and enjoyment. Sometimes they learn the terminologies of the genuine Sufis and then think to themselves that since we look like the Sufis and speak like them, we are doing good works like them. (This obviously contradicts sincerity and amounts to egotism). They feel that everything which is black in colour is a date [sweet], and that outward similarity necessitates equality in realities. Whereas this notion of theirs is very far from the truth. A person who cannot differentiate between fat and a tumour is most foolish. In other words, he cannot fathom the reason why a person's body is large – is it because of fat or because of a tumour. Such people have earned the wrath of Allāh *taʿālā*. (May Allāh *taʿālā* have mercy on us. Āmīn).[1]

Did you see! Hadrat Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* said that people want to become saints merely by wearing a hat, rags, a turban and a walking stick. In the same way, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* is saying that the saints

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[1] *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*, vol. 2, p. 248.

of today only have the outward similarity with Sufis. They adopted their terminologies and outward mannerisms, while the reality of tasawwuf which is the subjugation of the carnal self and establishing a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is nowhere to be found. Obviously, how will Dīn remain if people have turned the khānqāh into a business place and the customs of the Sufis as means to acquire of this world?

You have observed the statements of Hadrat Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* and Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh*, and how they exposed the pseudo and materialist Sufis.

Now listen to what Hadrat Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* has to say:

> If the creation is your objective, then all you have to do is wear the rags of the Sufis. Man can wear that and become a saint in the eyes of the people. Whereas the correct course of action is to strive in doing good actions and wear what you like. You may wear a crown on your head and place a flag on your shoulder. Saintliness is not merely the giving up of a type of clothing. Rather, it entails the giving up of this world, desires and greed. If silk clothes are worn on the battlefield so that a sword cannot cut through them, it is fine provided the one wearing them is a brave warrior. Beyond that, what is the benefit of arming a hermaphrodite?

He says in another place:

> What benefit can rags, a tasbīh and patched clothes bring in Allāh's path? You have to keep your self pure from ignoble

> characteristics and despicable actions. There is no need for you to wear a topī, you really need to adopt the character of the dervishes. You can even wear a Turkish hat if you want.

All this happens when there is no one to teach the true Dīn and the real Ṯarīqat, or there are very few. When this situation prevails, the worldly people get an opportunity to mislead and confuse. It is only a genuine shaykh who can differentiate between a custom and the reality, who explains the difference between sincerity and ostentation to them, and removes the seekers from the evils of the self and from egotism. But when there is no genuine shaykh, defective people occupy their place. Because they are not genuine in reality, all they can do is make claims to saintliness and authority. Consequently, the era gets filled with false claims, and there remains no sincere murīd and no genuine shaykh. Shaykh Akbar *raẖimahullāh* expresses his sorrow over this pitiable condition in the following words (which were quoted previously):

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd.

Obviously, once these people make claims to perfection, how will they ever see defects within themselves? When will they ever turn their attention to rectifying their carnal selves? As a result, they will remain in their haughtiness, egotism, selfishness, pride and claims to perfection. There is no worse evil

in the Tarīqat because the Sufis have labelled this to be synonymous to kufr. A poet says in this regard:

> There is no room for personal views and opinions in the world of sulūk. Personal view and opinions are kufr in this path.

The reason why it is called kufr is that when a person rejects the Being and attributes of Allāh *ta'ālā*, he becomes a kāfir. In the same way, when a person is treading the Tarīqat according to his whims and fancies, he will not be following the Sharī'at. If he does not follow the Sharī'at, he will not have removed himself from following Shaytān and the carnal self. And this is the total opposite of the Tarīqat just as kufr is the opposite of Islam.

In his *Mathnawī*, Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that the key to success if for a person to focus on his shortcomings and to consider himself to be defective. He says:

> The one who recognizes his own shortcomings and defects will move very swiftly towards his perfection.
>
> The reason why a person is unable to climb spiritually towards Allāh *ta'ālā* is that he considers himself to be perfect.
>
> The fact of the matter is that there is no worse ailment than imaginary perfection. And it is no play to come out of pride and arrogance.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says further on that egotism leaves the mind only when a lot of blood flows from the heart and eyes. In other words, it requires intense striving, especially subjugation of the carnal self. It was the very same ailment which caused the

downfall of Shayṯān. This ailment is found in every person – a little in some, a lot in others. This makes it necessary for him to go into the service of a qualified shaykh and to offer himself like a corpse in the hands of the one who is bathing him. This too is not easy. It is not easy to become an enemy of one's own self. It is not easy to restrain the carnal self for the sake of Allāh *taʿālā*. Only the one who is sincere and inspired by Allāh *taʿālā* is able to place a foot in this dangerous valley.

These factors were found in the past. The murīds used to go to have their selves rectified. The mashā'ikh too were very particular about education and training. Consequently, they did not remove these evils from their murīds alone, but followed this course of action with their children and associates as well. This is why the murīds and the children were rectified.

Let me present an example of this to you. A person went to the khānqāh of a saint in Delhi and began distributing one rupee to each of the seekers. The son of the saint was also present. The man was about to give him one rupee as well, but the son withdrew his hand. The shaykh was observing this. He called both of them and asked his son: "Why did you not take the money? Why did you withdraw your hand? Is it because it is charity? Had he given 100 rupees, you would have taken it and it would not have been charity in such a case?" The shaykh then turned to the man who was distributing the money, extended his hand towards him and said: "Give me the money." The shaykh turned to his son and said: "Your father was brought up with charity."

Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of training and the supervision of one's associates! From just this one

treatment, pride, arrogance and haughtiness were uprooted from the mind of his son.

Unfortunately these practices are not found in us. The Sufis themselves do not follow the principles of the Ṯarīqat. What, then, can be said about their murīds and associates? The reason for it is the same, viz. disregard to the carnal self. Instead of giving up its demands, its desires are being fulfilled. Whereas the Sufis unanimously say that the rights of the self will be given, but it will be saved from pleasures. (In other words, a balance will be created in it). Do you see any importance being given to this nowadays? I believe that pleasures have been given the status of rights. In other words, people have become so engrossed in pleasures of the self and pay so much of attention to their acquisition as ought to be given to rights and duties. Whereas this is most detrimental to the novice and the expert. Ḫaḏrat Maulānā Shāh Muḫammad Ismāʿīl Shahīd *raḫimahullāh* writes:

> It should be known that although listening to poetry without musical instruments or intermingling with young boys without having any desire is not from among he prohibitions of the Sharīʿat it is certainly not devoid of harm for the seekers of the truth, especially for the seekers of the path of prophet-hood.
>
> All the spiritual physicians – i.e. the genuine Sufis – unanimously state that it is harmful for the seekers of the truth to follow the pleasures of the self. Especially that desire of the self which has become firmly embedded in the self itself, whose sweetness has established itself in the depths of the heart, and the self is lost in

> its search and its acquisition. These are certainly not from among the rights of the self, so giving them up will not cause any weakness or debility in the body as normally happens when a person gives up eating and drinking.[1]

Look! It is clearly stated here that the Sufis state that the rights of the self will be fulfilled but it will be restrained from its pleasures. This is why when anyone acted against this principle, it ended in bad consequences. You just observed this from the story of the ostentatious worshipper – where his downfall was caused by his engrossment in pleasures and desires. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. May Allāh *taʿālā* safeguard all the seekers from downfall.

Note: Māshā Allāh, this is a most beneficial and enlightening subject. We ought to read it carefully and act on it. And we must make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to inspire us towards action. (compiler)

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[1] *S̲irāṯ-e-Mustaqīm*, p. 97.

UNITY LEADS TO SUCCESS WHILE DISUNITY LEADS TO CORRUPTION

Mutual unity and harmony is from among the causes of success while disunity is the opposite of success, i.e. it leads to corruption and failure. Nowadays I am seeing a lot of disunity among the Muslims. Consequently, there is a lot of bickering in almost every family. Even two people cannot live in harmony. If in a family a certain person experiences worldly prosperity by virtue of divine decree and his sound planning, most of his relatives become jealous of his progress and they find it difficult to come to terms with his affluence. They will think to themselves in their hearts: “Why does he not include us in his world?” In order to prove that this demand of theirs is correct, their carnal self will beautify a proof for them and cause them to think: “We are his close relatives and we have blood ties with him. Coincidentally he became rich while we are paupers. In such a case, it was his duty to take care of us.”

If the person happens to be a bit religious, this proof is made even more stronger, and then they do not restrict their thoughts to their hearts. Instead, they will utter them verbally as well. They will then speak behind his back, complain about him and mention various evils about him. Whereas his only fault is that he did not realize their needs by himself and without their expressing their needs to him. And after realizing it, he did not give them according to their needs. It is solely for this “crime” that people are displeased with him in their hearts and are angry with him. In fact, they go to the extent of hating him and becoming his

enemies. To make matters worse, they are so much in need of him internally and are so desirous of his wealth, but they will portray themselves as though they are totally independent of him and they do not need him in the least. They will even go to the extent of saying to him: “We are not bothered about you nor are we interested in your wealth.”

From this statement it is gauged that they have the highest level of reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. The ʿulamā’ say that greed and reliance (tawakkul) cannot get together. Yet, these people are able to combine the two. Their condition is that they want to acquire benefit from a person but not by following the correct procedure. They want to do it in a disorderly and disruptive manner. Not by making him happy but by displeasing him. They want to benefit from him by fighting with him. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

This ailment is not peculiar to a specific nation or place. It is the condition of worldly people in general. The same attitude exists in the subject with respect to his leader, the murīd with respect to his shaykh, the student with his teacher, and the son with his father. In fact, I can go one step further and say that this is the attitude of the creation with respect to its Creator. People are demanding sustenance from Allāh *taʿālā*, they are demanding good health and wellbeing from Him, and they are asking Him for peace and good fortune in this world. It is our belief that whatever profit and loss we experience in this world can only be by the will of Allāh *taʿālā*. On one hand we have this belief, yet we do not abstain from disobeying Allāh *taʿālā*. This is exactly the point I am making when I say that the creation wants to derive benefit from its Creator but by following the course of disobedience.

This is where the mistake starts from because our affair with Allāh *taʿālā* demanded that we fulfil it in the correct manner. But we want to take sustenance from Allāh *taʿālā* by disobeying Him. Since this is our attitude with our Creator, we have adopted the same procedure with the creation. We want to fulfil a certain objective from a person and acquire our benefit from him, but we want to do it by displeasing him. When a person is earning in a certain family, the rest of the family are displeased with him but they also want to benefit from him. They want the person to understand all their needs on his own, and to then fulfil them without their asking. They feel they must not tell him anything so that their pride remains intact. When it comes to outsiders, they are prepared to ask them for the most insignificant of things without feeling any shame or indignity. But when it comes to their own family member, they feel that it is synonymous to death to ask him even if they are in extreme need and most dire circumstances. The reason is their impoliteness and pride. To make matters worse, these people are proud themselves, yet they will sit in public and speak about their wealthy relative in a manner to prove that he is impolite and proud. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

We accept that if a person experiences affluence and prosperity he must be considerate of his relatives. If a person does not have this much fellow-feeling then this is a major defect in his character. I accept that this is bad-mannered. However your attitude of having a need in your heart while portraying yourself as independent, and not expressing your need to him although he is your relative is also an evil because you nurtured pride and jealousy in your heart. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

If you want to acquire any benefit from a person, the way of doing it is to keep him happy and to create a place for yourself in his heart. I have observed that when a person pleases his seniors and creates a place for himself in their heart, then the seniors reciprocate with kindness and affection. The person's worldly and Dīnī life come in order.

An attendant of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate his own story to me. He said: "My worldly life and Dīnī life have both been sorted out. This is how it happened. Hadrat Maulānā sent a message to Pīrānī Sāhibah [Hadrat Thānwī's wife] saying: 'He is my friend. I will eat half rotī and I will give the other half to him.' Subsequently, I receive a share of anything which comes as a gift to Hadrat. Whether it is fruit, sweetmeats or whatever else, I get half of it. In fact, if someone sends a length of fabric, half of it will come to me. Can there be any better arrangement for my worldly and Dīnī life?"

All praises are due to Allāh *ta'ālā* for His kindness.

TWO IMPORTANT OBLIGATIONS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* read a letter of a very senior scholar in an assembly. In that letter, the scholar wrote in praise of Hadrat Maulānā. In the course of the assembly, Hadrat addressed everyone and said: I did not read this letter to you in order to praise my self. Rather, I want to direct your attention to a specific objective. This is not the time to expect praises from you people and to consider it to be the work of the Tarīqat."

The fact of the matter is that the nation – as regards Islam or as a nation – has died. There are one or two people, though in the minority, who still have life in them. It is because of them that some feeling remains. Those who have feelings know very well that the nation has died and that it is not easy to revive it. The present era is one of severe tests and tribulations for Muslims. There are all types of tests and tribulations. The greatest test is that of īmān. It is essential for every person who is tested to perceive the test. If not, it will cast him into the valley of death. Some people do perceive the test, but is the perception correct or not? Correct perception is perceived by only certain people, although everyone has some type of perception or the other. It is the duty of those who have correct perception to strive to develop it in others.

The other point is that what must they do after developing that perception. Life has to come into them and they all must get attached to the work. After perception and realization, comes the stage of action. I would like to say something in this regard. Understand it well. If you do not understand it from

my explanation, need will teach it to you. If you understand it from the beginning and die after having understood it, it will cause you no harm. There will be nothing but benefit for you.

Now listen. You have to do two things:

One is to establish a correct bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and a correct relationship with Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. I mentioned previously that the greatest test is that of īmān. Īmān is connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The level of your bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will indicate the level of your īmān. If you have correct īmān and a genuine bond, you will receive assistance from the One in whom you have īmān. Muslims have always been successful through Allāh's help. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنْ يَّنْصُرْكُمُ اللهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ ج وَإِنْ يَّخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِيْ يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِ ط وَعَلَى اللهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ.

If Allāh helps you, no one will be able to overcome you. If He does not help you, who is there that can help you after Him? It is in Allāh alone that the Muslims should place their trust.[1]

In every era, when Muslims experienced a situation of this nature, they strengthened their īmān and turned towards Allāh *taʿālā*.

The second thing which you have to do is set right your relationship with Allāh's servants. If we can practise on this today, we will become very strong and

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 160.

powerful. Unfortunately, there is no limit to our weakness today. This is what has weakened us further. Our mutual fighting and disputing have scattered our power. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلاَ تَنَازَعُوْا فَتَفْشَلُوْا

And do not dispute with each other or else you will lose courage.[1]

We have two types of relationship. One is with Allāh *taʿālā*. We have to be so strong and firm in this relationship that the greatest of powers must not be able to shake us. The other relationship is with the servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. This too has to be strong and firm. The reason for the weakness in our mutual relationships is the weakness of our īmān. It is because of this that our relationship with people of īmān is weak. Our bond with people of īmān is essentially on the basis of īmān. The stronger our īmān, the stronger and more fruitful will be our relationship with the people of īmān. Weakness in that īmān is known as hypocrisy.

We do not have to say anything to outsiders. We have to speak to our own people. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught the noblest character and people received success on account of it. Unfortunately, let alone the laity, even the elite do not pay attention to it.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went to the extent of saying:

بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق

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[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 46.

I have been sent for the perfection of noble character.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اُدْعُ إِلٰى سَبِيْلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ.

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and with kind admonition. And argue with them in a way that is best.[1]

Even if there is a need to argue with someone, it must be done in a manner which is best. This is an explicit order of the Qur'ān which can never be abrogated.

Allāh *taʿālā* also says:

اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ، فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ.

Reply with that which is best. You will then see that he, between whom and you there was enmity, shall be as though he is your close friend.[2]

Before this Allāh *taʿālā* explained injunctions which are related to Him, and whose carrying out will set right the bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. He is now explaining matters which will set right the mutual relationships of the creation. Included in this is to respond to evil with kindness. If you do this, your enemy will become like a very close friend. If not, he will at least become similar to a friend. There are times when enmity is changed into genuine friendship, and an enemy becomes a sincere friend.

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[1] Sūrah an-Na<u>h</u>l, 16: 125.

[2] Sūrah <u>H</u>ā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 34.

Listen! Hasanah (piety) is good in itself and brings good results. And sayyi'ah (evil) is bad in itself and its results are bad. The effects of piety are totally different from those of evil. Piety produces good results and good effects, while evil does the opposite. But now evil in itself is considered to be a great feat, and people rejoice when they see its bad effects. It is so sad that the temperament itself has become corrupt.

Allāh *taʿālā* orders us to repulse evil with good. One way of doing it is that if someone does bad to you, you remain silent and do not respond in any way. This is a good response. Another better way is to respond to his evil by doing good to him. This is best. A poet says:

> It is easy to respond to evil with evil. However, true valour is to do good to the one who does you harm.

This is the instruction of Allāh *taʿālā* and this is what Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* taught. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* learnt it from him and demonstrated it practically. Hadrat Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān Sāhib ʿUthmānī *rahimahullāh*, a former rector of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband writes in his well-known book, *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

> The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* stood up as true and practical ambassadors for the spread of Islam. Their life conditions and transactions were like proofs for the Islamic creed. When the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were observed after hearing about the beliefs and injunctions of Islam, they used to be more firm than the claims to the genuineness of Islam and other obvious proofs. Every person was compelled to consider it to be the truth. This is the secret behind the astounding

> and swift progress and spread of Islam. Although stories about the bravery, valour, war preparations of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* are unparalleled in history and it cannot present even a slight similarity, we will not relate those incidents at this point. Nor will we take you on an exploration of their victories on the various battlefields, but will demonstrate to you why nations after nations entered the fold of Islam. What were the causes for their ready and enthusiastic acceptance of Islam?[1]

In short, the force of noble character is so powerful that it must inevitably leave its mark. The nations which were subjugated were done through character. Even now, if they are to be influenced, it will have to be through character. Leave aside outsiders, even if your own children, your own murīds and your own students see the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in you, they will have faith and confidence in you. In fact, I can say that if your near ones see the slightest wavering from the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in you, they will immediately lose their confidence in you. This is why you have to be even more careful with your close associates. It is essential for a shaykh to portray the best and noblest character among his associates so that the confidence of the murīd remains intact and he derives benefit from him.

I was saying to you that there are two types of relationships; one is with Allāh *taʿālā* and the other is with the creation. It is most difficult to combine the

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[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 78.

two. There are many obstacles when developing a relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. One major obstacle is a person's carnal self. It will have to be subjugated and subdued. It is even more difficult to set right your relationship with people. People consider establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā* to be easy and they did it by remaining aloof from people and living in the jungles. However, to live among people and to maintain a correct relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and with people – very few were successful in this regard. This is because it is a very difficult stage to combine both relationships. When a person perfects his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and develops affinity with Him, it is inevitable for him to experience aloofness and detachment from people. Sometimes the aloofness reaches such a level that a person chooses total solitude. He becomes a manifestation of the following couplet:

> His heart is not attached to the orchard and he feels restless in the desert. Now where will we take this madman to?

This is also a level of wilāyat (close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*), but a level higher than that is to be internally attached to Allāh *taʿālā* while his relations and interactions with people are in order, and he continues fulfilling their rights. This is the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and this is what the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* did. Their total bond was with Allāh *taʿālā*, and they interacted with people in such a manner that they could not even perceive the level of attachment with Allāh *taʿālā*. There was a Tābiʿī who used to wear a set of clothes which cost 1 000 dīnārs, but his spiritual condition was such that he would spend the entire night reading just one verse of the Qur'ān. He used to cry so much

and enjoy reading that verse so greatly that he would continue repeating it until the next morning.

Now we see that there is some inclination towards establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*, and when we teach people something about it, they are happy with it. But when they are told to set right their relationships with Allāh's servants, they are not successful. This is because they do not even consider it to be part of Dīn. Whereas noble character is an important part of Dīn. Dīn cannot be complete without it. There can be no success without adopting the character of Allāh *taʿālā*. Make Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the link and then see whether you succeed or not.

Make a habit of reading the Sunnat du'ās

We must make it a point of constantly reading the duʿā's which have been reported in the Ah̲ādīth. When Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made duʿā' at every moment and occasion, why should we not do it? Allāh *taʿālā* quotes many duʿā's of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* in the Qur'ān. Do you think He quoted them without any purpose? Do you think there is no benefit in them? Listen! He quoted them so that we read them and practise on them. Listen to the following as an example. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the following duʿā' of H̲ad̲rat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions:

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ. رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا، وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ.

O our Lord! We have placed our trust in You. Towards You have we turned. And to You alone is the final return. O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the

unbelievers. And forgive us, O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.[1]

Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions made this duʿā' when they separated themselves from their people. They took refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* and cried to Him.

رَبَّنَا عَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ اَنَبْنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ

O our Lord! We have placed our trust in You. Towards You have we turned. And to You alone is the final return.

In other words, we placed our trust in You for all our affairs and handed over everything to You. We will eventually be returned to You.

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا

O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers.

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says: This means: O Allāh! Do not empower the unbelievers over us whereupon they will imprison us and torture us.

Hadrat Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* says it means: O our Allāh! Do not punish us at their hands. Or, do not send any punishment to us on account of which the unbelievers will assume that they are on the truth while we are on falsehood. Consequently, they will fall into tribulation (and abstain from embracing īmān). Another meaning is: Do not give them expansion in their sustenance due to which they will believe that they are on the truth and accepted in Allāh's sight.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 4-5.

Subjugation by the unbelievers because of sinning

وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا

And forgive us.

In other words, forgive us for any shortcomings.

The reason for seeking forgiveness on this occasion is explained by Qāḏī Thanā'ullāh S̲āh̲ib Pānīpattī *rah̲imahullāh*. He says: Muslims are sometimes subjugated by the unbelievers because of their [Muslims'] sins. This is a most important point which is worthy of consideration.

رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ

O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.

In other words, You are so mighty that when any person comes in Your refuge and places his trust in You, no one will be able to harm him in any way.

Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī states: You are so mighty that anyone who comes into Your refuge can never be subjugated, and his hopes can never be lost.

You are all wise as regards Your words, actions and promulgations.

Look at how powerful this duʿā' is, and how beautifully the exegetes explained it! I explained only this much so that when we make this duʿā' we should at least have the reason behind making it in our mind. If not, we will be repeating these words for the rest of our lives like parrots without understanding what they mean.

After quoting this duʿā’ of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām* and his companions, Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْهِمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَمَنْ يَّتَوَلَّ فَإِنَ اللهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ.

There is an excellent example in them for whoever hopes in [meeting] Allāh and the Last Day. But whoever turns away, Allāh alone is independent, worthy of all praise.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says thereafter:

عَسَى اللهُ اَنْ يَّجْعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ عَادَيْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً وَّاللهُ قَدِيْرٌ وَاللهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ.

It is hoped that Allāh will place friendship between you and those of them who are your enemies. Allāh has power over everything. Allāh is forgiving, merciful.[2]

It is stated in *Tafsīr Kabīr* that when Allāh *taʿālā* ordered the believers to go against the unbelievers, they became very firm in their enmity towards their fathers, children and other relatives; and they severed ties completely from them. Allāh *taʿālā* therefore revealed this verse.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that when Allāh *taʿālā* saw the firmness of the believers in their Dīn, and their resoluteness in severing ties from their fathers, children and relatives, Allāh *taʿālā* made this promise for the satisfaction of their hearts that there is hope from Allāh *taʿālā* that He will place friendship

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[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 6.

[2] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 7.

in the hearts of those towards whom you are antagonistic. Allāh *taʿālā* is all powerful, and He is most forgiving and merciful.

Allāh *taʿālā* fulfilled this promise by honouring them with victory. Subsequently, their people embraced Islam and intense love and affection was established.

The fact of the matter is that how can Allāh *taʿālā* ever tolerate a mutual break in ties among His servants? The initial severance of ties and enmity was promulgated so that the believers become firm in their Dīn, and their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* becomes strong. When the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* demonstrated this on the highest level and they proved to be successful in this objective, Allāh *taʿālā* encouraged them to strike a balance in their enmity by hoping that Allāh *taʿālā* creates love between the two. You will then regret your severity and enmity. This is why you should be balanced in your enmity.

Islam came to put an end to enmity

Islam came to put an end to enmity; not to increase it. Islam came to create peace and harmony; not to create war and disharmony. There was no peace and harmony in the world. Islam came and created peace and harmony. In order for wealth and affluence to prevail, it is inevitable for it to oppress and subjugate those who are its subjects, and to look at them with scorn. But the amazing feat of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* was that they conquered region upon region, but they did not change in the least. The fact of the matter is that īmān was firmly embedded in their hearts. Their relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* prevailed over all other relationships. Thus, despite amassing worldly authority and wealth, they did not allow humility, humbleness and the noble character of

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to leave them. This was their excellent feat. This is why nations began embracing Islam enthusiastically and without any compulsion.

It is therefore necessary for us to adopt Islamic character. We must recognize Allāh's workings and be conscious of His power and might. Allāh *taʿālā* will help us by virtue of His absolute power. We will have to cry before Him. He will listen to us and accept our invocations. Duʿā's are accepted just as different acts of worship are accepted. The stronger our hopes, the more likely that our duʿā's will be accepted even if the means may not appear to be in our favour. Allāh *taʿālā* is not in need of means. The presence of means or their absence, strength and weakness – all these things mean nothing to Him. What is so difficult for the Being who can bring from non-existence into existence to give strength to the weak!? However, we need to realize this.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most comprehensive pieces of advice. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the inspiration to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

Listen to a few incidents which demonstrate how duʿā's are accepted.

A king fell ill and the treatment was not helping. A saint happened to pass by. The king sent one of his men to call him. When the saint came in, the king said: "Make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* cures me from this illness." The saint said: "There are countless people who are unjustly lying in prisons because of you. How can I make duʿā' for you?" The king issued an order for all prisoners to be released. The saint then made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*: "O Allāh! You have already shown to this king the misfortune of disobedience. Now let

him taste the joy of obedience.” The king was cured immediately.

A person’s relative was ill. He made this duʿā’: “O Allāh! Cure him and give me the illness instead.” This is exactly what happened. The relative recovered while the person fell ill and died.

Note: There is no need to make such a duʿā’. Allāh *taʿālā* has absolute power; there is no need for any condition or prerequisite. (compiler)

Incidents where duʿā’s have been accepted are so many and witnessed daily that there can be no doubt in them. Why, then, do we not emulate Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as regards duʿā’? Do you think the duʿā’s which are in the Qur’ān and Hadīth are there for nothing? Do you think there is no benefit in them? Make duʿā’ with full conviction. The extent of Allāh’s help depends on the strength of your īmān. The same can be said about the acceptance of duʿā’s.

وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Honour is for Allāh and His Messenger, and for the believers.[1]

The following duʿā’ is also mentioned in the Qur’ān:

رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَّفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَّقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

O our Lord! Give us good in the world and good in the Hereafter, and save us from the punishment of Hell.

You probably do not value this duʿā’. You probably read it but do not know its importance whereas it is a most powerful duʿā’. It encompasses all Dīnī and

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu’minūn, 8.

worldly needs. You must certainly make it a habit to make this duʿā’. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* has explained its virtues in *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah* and says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make it the most.

Now listen to the following duʿā’ of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ اَوَّلَ هٰذَا النَّهَارِ صَلَاحًا، وَّاَوْسَطَهُ فَلَاحًا، وَّاٰخِرَهُ نَجَاحًا

O Allāh! Make the first portion of this day into righteousness, the middle portion of it into prosperity, and the last portion of it into success.

Make it a habit of making this duʿā’ as well – not only in the morning, but in the afternoon and evening as well. You will experience peace throughout the day and night.

Listen to the following duʿā’ of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ الْفَوْزَ فِي الْقَضَآءِ، وَنُزُلَ الشُّهَدَآءِ، وَعَيْشَ السُّعَدَآءِ، وَمُرَافَقَةَ الْاَنْبِيَآءِ، وَالنَّصْرَ عَلَى الْاَعْدَآءِ، اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَآءِ.

O Allāh! I ask You for success in what is destined, hospitality which will be extended to martyrs, the life of fortunate persons, the companionship of the Prophets, and victory against the enemies. Surely You hear all invocations.

Māshā Allāh! What a beautiful duʿā’! It ends with: “Surely You hear all invocations.” These words acts as catalysts for the acceptance of duʿā’s. When Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* made duʿā’, he concluded it with the same words:

رَبِّ هَبْ لِيْ مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً اِنَّكَ سَمِيْعُ الدُّعَاءِ.

O Allāh! Bless me with pure children from You. Surely You hear all invocations.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made thousands of similar duʿā's. We are required to make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* and to beg of Him, this is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* opened the door to invocations. He began presenting his requests in the court of the Giver with absolute humbleness and servitude by using the words "I ask You". He continued in this way throughout his life and all his duʿā's were accepted. What right does his ummat have not to emulate him in this regard? Why should it deprive itself of this honour? We all must make duʿā', and in the words which were used by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This is because those words were liked and accepted by Allāh *taʿālā*. In the same way, we must make it a habit of making those duʿā's of the other Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* and righteous people which are mentioned in the Qur'ān. Your duʿā's will be accepted as they were accepted in favour of the past peoples. Understand this well.

THE PROPHETIC SYSTEM AND DIFFERENCES IN RANK

I am going to relate a Hadīth to you in which there is success in both worlds.

عن العرباض بن سارية قال صلى بنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ثم أقبل علينا بوجهه فوعظنا موعظة بليغة ذرفت منها العيون ووجلت منها القلوب، فقال رجل: يا رسول الله كأن هذه موعظة مودع فأوصنا. فقال أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة وإن كان عبدا حبشيا فإنه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالنواجذ، واياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإن كل محدثة بدعة وكل بدعة ضلالة.[1]

Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam led us in salāh and then turned to us and delivered a very comprehensive lecture. Our hearts trembled by it and our eyes shed tears. A man said: "O Rasūlullāh! This seems to be the admonition of a person bidding farewell, so advise us." He said: "I advise you to constantly fear Allāh, and to listen and obey even if an Abyssinian slave were to rule over you. Whoever remains alive from among you [after me], will witness many differences. You should therefore hold on firmly

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[1] رواه أحمد، وابو داؤد، والترمذي، وابن ماجه.

to my Sunnat and the way of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold on to it firmly. Beware of introducing new things into the religion. Surely every innovation is deviation."

This pure Hadīth contains an alchemic prescription for the ummat during trying and difficult times like the present.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* provides a system to the ummat for the rectification of its world. And that is "obedience". In other words, every junior is ordered to obey his senior whether he is a ruler, a leader, parents, a teacher or a shaykh. The system of this world exists on obedience. When it is non-existent, there is tribulation and corruption. If you look around today, you will realize that we are not practising on the order to obey. Every junior – despite being a junior – is behaving as though he is a senior. Every senior – despite being a senior – is treated like a junior.

Whereas we learn from the Hadīth that there has to be differences in rank. In other words, a junior has to behave like a junior and a senior has to behave like a senior. A father must be looked up as a father, a teacher must be given his rank, and a shaykh must be placed on his position.

The same theme is explained in a Hadīth as follows:

من لم يرحم صغيرنا ولم يوقر كبيرنا ولم يُبَجِّلْ عالمينا فليس منا.[1]

The one who is not merciful to our juniors, does not show respect to our seniors, and does not revere our scholars is not of us.

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[1] نور الأنوار.

He has done something which is different from our way and our Dīn, this is why we have nothing to do with him.

From here too we learn the need for differences in rank. The Sufis too say that this is essential. Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* say that it is necessary for people to consider each other's ranks. If this is not done, then the most certain outcome will be corruption. It will first result in corruption in our worldly life and then our Dīn.

Success in this world is dependent on preserving the differences in rank. Juniors must be respectful to their seniors, while seniors must be considerate towards their juniors. They must treat them with mercy. In the same way, the laity must respect their 'ulamā'. No one must be able to complain about the other, and no one must need to demand his rights from the other. If this is realized, there will be absolute and total peace in the world. Corruption will cease completely.

One of the reasons for the absence of obedience today is that every person feels that he has the right to voice his opinion and believes his opinion to be the best. He is not prepared to accept the opinion of another, and therefore not ready to follow him. There is a deluge of views, and divergent views are causing a deluge of tribulations.

A Hadīth refers to this (i.e. when every person is bent on his own view) as one of the signs of Resurrection. It is also referred to as the most destructive of the three destructive things. The Hadīth reads as follows:

عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: ثلاث منجيات وثلاث مهلكات. فالمنجيات فتقوى الله في السر والعلانية، والقول بالحق في الرضا والسخط، والقصد في الغنى والفقر. وأما المهلكات فهوى متبع، وشح مطاع، وإعجاب المرء بنفسه وهي أشدهن.[1]

Hadrat Abū Hurayrah radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: There are three things which are salvations and three are destroyers. The salvations are: (1) Allāh consciousness in private and public. (2) Speaking the truth whether in a state of happiness or anger. (3) Moderation in one's spending whether in a state of prosperity or poverty. The destroyers are: (1) A desire which is followed. (2) Miserliness which is obeyed. (3) When a person is conceited by his views, and this is the worst of the three.

The order to consult

This is the situation today. In order to put an end to it, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered us to consult (to make mashwarah). He said:

مَا هَلَكَ قَوْمٌ عَنِ الْمَشْوَرَةِ

A nation which consults is not destroyed.

Allāh *taʿālā* also instructed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to consult:

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[1] مشكوة المصابيح، ج ٢، ص ١٤٥.

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

Consult them in matters.

When there is consultation, each person no longer relies on his own view. In this way, the thing which could cause corruption is terminated. This is how Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* put an end to it and neutralized the poison of personal opinions.

The importance of piety and obedience

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* guaranteed us our Hereafter by ordering us towards piety. And by instructing us to hear and obey, he prepared the way for our worldly success. It is therefore essential for the Muslim nation to pay attention to this prophetic system. In other words, it must choose piety and obey the person who is appointed as its ruler even if he is an Abyssinian slave. In other words, we will not look at the rank and lineage of the leader. Rather, obedience to the one who is appointed as a leader becomes obligatory.

The issue of obedience is a very important one in Islam. The saints say:

> The one who submits himself before another will soon become one before whom others submit.

The Sufis say that the one who is capable becomes accepted at some time in the future. In other words, his capability conveys him to the level of being accepted in the eyes of people. In the same way, the one who is a seeker will soon become the one who is sought. The one who is a murīd (an aspirant) will soon become one who is aspired. These are the fruits of obedience. Obedience is the fruit of īmān. The more

īmān a person has, the more obedient he will be. The special attribute of a believer – in fact, the hallmark of a believer – is obedience. This is the attribute which the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* possessed. On one occasion when they said: “We have heard and accepted”, Allāh *taʿālā* praised them for it and mentioned it in the Qur’ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ط كُلٌّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ قف لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ قف وَقَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ز غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَاِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيْرُ.

The Messenger accepted whatever was sent down to him from his Lord, and the Muslims (accepted it) as well. All of them believed in Allāh, His angels, His Books, and in His Messengers. They say: “We do not differentiate between any of His Messengers.” And they said: “We have heard and accepted! We seek Your pardon, O our Lord! To You alone is our return.[1]

On the other hand, the Jews used to say: We heard (with our ears) and we disobey (with our hearts). Whereas the actual hearing is when one hears with his ears and his heart. Allāh *taʿālā* relates the statement of the Jews as follows:

مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا يُحَرِّفُوْنَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَّوَاضِعِهٖ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَاسْمَعْ غَيْرَ مُسْمَعٍ وَّرَاعِنَا لَيًّا بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ وَطَعْنًا فِي الدِّيْنِ ط وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَاسْمَعْ وَانْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ.

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 285.

Some Jews distort the word from its context and say: "We heard and disobeyed" and they say: "Hear without being made to hear" and they say: "Rāʿinā" twisting their tongues and defaming the religion. Had they said: "We heard and obeyed, and hear and look towards us" it would have been better for them and more upright.[1]

From these explicit texts we learn the high status of obedience. I will add one more point. I said that each person must recognize the right of the other. The junior must recognize the right of the senior. The student must recognize the right of the teacher. A son must recognize the right of his father. The murīd must recognize the right of his shaykh. The ruled must recognize the right of the ruler. The subjects must recognize the right of the king. If each one recognizes the right of the other, it will be a means of success in this world. What this means is that the temperaments in general are such that if their rights are fulfilled and they are treated well, they will appreciate the kindness and value the benefactor.

It is also possible to come across a person who, no matter how kind and affectionate you are to him, it has no effect on him. Such a person is internally depraved. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Tafhīmāt*:

> Befriend people while observing two prerequisites. One is you must sever all desire from them and what they posses because if Allāh *taʿālā* wills, you will get a share of their wealth without waiting for it

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 46

> and expecting it. (If this is the case, why should you hanker after it?)
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> The other is to desire the wellbeing of everyone, meet them with a smiling mien and treat them kindly irrespective of whether a person is rich or poor, a person of authority and position or one who is unknown. Be considerate of each one's position and treat him accordingly. (If you do this, you have fulfilled his right and absolved yourself of your duty). If any person is antagonistic towards you after this, he is internally depraved. Those who have been oppressive will soon come to know by what kind of turning they will turn.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* stressed the need and importance of obedience. If people follow, they will experience success in both worlds. There is an evil which is quite common among us. It too becomes a cause of differences, disputes, hatred and enmity. I feel I ought to speak about it as well. The Sharīʿat speaks about the prohibition of backbiting and carrying tales.

The despicability of backbiting and carrying tales

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raẖimahullāh* writes in his well-known book, *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

These two traits are from among the most repugnant evil characteristics, and they are very common among people. You would rarely find someone who is not

[1] *Tafhīmāt*, vol. 2, p. 104.

caught up in it. There is a need to speak a lot on this subject in order to save people from it. I will first explain backbiting.

Backbiting refers to saying anything about your brother which he will find offensive. This includes his body, Dīn, sincerity, wealth, children, wife, workers, slaves, turban, clothes, manner of walking and movements, happiness, strictness, fluent speech, or anything else about him. Anything in this regard will be considered to be backbiting whether you say it verbally, in writing, or through signs and gestures. Whether the gestures are with your eyes, hands, head, or any other part of your body.

Examples of backbiting about the body is when you refer to a person as being blind, lame, dim-sighted, bald, short, tall, black, etc.

Included in backbiting about Dīnī matters of a person is when you refer to him as a fāsiq, a treacherous person, an oppressor, lazy in performing s̲alāh, careless about purity, disobedient to his parents, he does not give his zakāh to the rightful recipients, or you say that he does not abstain from backbiting. (All these matters entail finding fault with the Dīnī life of a person and are therefore included in backbiting).

As for discussing worldly matters which may offend people and are therefore classified as backbiting would include the following: to refer to a person as being uncouth, lacking in good mannerisms, he scorns other people, he does not fulfil the rights of others, he speaks too much, he eats a lot, he sleeps a lot, he sleeps at the wrong times, he sits in the place which is reserved for someone else, and so on.

Speaking about a person's parents in a manner which could offend him would include the following: you say

to a person: Your father is a fāsiq, your father is an Indian, your father is an African, your father is a cobbler, your father is a fabric merchant, your father is a tinker, your father is a carpenter, your father is an ironmonger, your father is a weaver.

Speaking about a person's character in a manner which he may find offensive includes the following: you say that he is unmannerly, he is proud, he likes to argue, he is a tyrant, he is incapable, he is cowardly, he gets angry very quickly, he is harsh, etc.

Finding fault with a person's clothing would include: he is the one who has broad sleeves, or lengthy clothes, dirty clothes, etc.

These were examples of speaking about a person's body, Dīn, parents, character and clothing. The same can be applied when speaking about a person's slaves, workers and so on. The principle is that if you say anything about a person in his absence which he finds offensive, it will be classified as backbiting.[1]

I say that it is essential to bear in mind the details given by Imām Nawawī *rahimahullāh* on the subject of backbiting. This is because it is a serious sin while people are most inconsiderate in this regard.

Additional details on backbiting

Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا

Nor backbite one another.[2]

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[1] *Kitāb al-Adhkār*, p. 429.

[2] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 12.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to this verse:

Do not speak about each other in the other's absence in a manner which the other will find offensive because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Do you know what is backbiting?" The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* replied: "Allāh and His Messenger know best." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "It is when you speak about your brother in a manner which he finds offensive." Someone asked: "What if my brother really has what I say about him?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "If that quality is really found in him then you have backbitten him. And if that quality is not in him then you have slandered him."[1]

He writes further on:

The meaning of what he finds offensive is general – it could refer to matters related to his Dīn or his worldly life, his character, his wealth, his children, his wife, his slaves, his servants, his clothing or anything else which is related to him.

He then writes much further on:

It could well include things which are considered to be minor sins. For example, backbiting about things which will not offend a person too much, e.g. finding fault with his clothing or his animal. Then there is backbiting which is the worst of the major sins, e.g. backbiting the Auliyā' and 'ulamā' by referring to them as fāsiq and fājirs (flagrant sinners and immoral

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[1] Hadīth narrated by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nasa'ī.

people), or other similar words which are most offensive and distasteful.

The preferred view is that if a person hears backbiting and remains silent despite being able to stop it, he will be included in the sin of backbiting.[1]

Note: Ponder over the important decision passed by ʿAllāmah ʿĀlūsī *rahimahullāh* [the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī*]. He says that backbiting about people in general is a major sin, while backbiting about the Auliyā' and ʿulamā' is the worst of the major sins. I say, in the same way, disobedience and disrespect to every respectable person is a major sin, while disrespect to one's parents is the worst of the major sins. In his list of the worst major sins, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* coupled ascribing partners with Allāh *taʿālā* with disobedience to parents.

Obedience of the Sahābah

I was speaking on the subject of obedience and said that in order to rectify relations among people, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered obedience, and advised the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to listen and obey. He also advised that seniors must be merciful to juniors. This is his Sunnat and the way which is liked by Allāh *taʿālā*. He then instructed seniors and juniors to respect and honour the ʿulamā' because respecting them entails respecting Dīn, and belittling them entails belittling the Sharīʿat. And there can no worse corruption than this. In every era, the Dīn which was conveyed to the laity was conveyed by the ʿulamā'. If the laity in a

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[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī*, vol. 24, p. 160.

nation are going to oppose their ʿulamāʾ and respect for them is not found in their hearts, there can be no way that the laity can be reformed and rectified. Thus, while bearing in mind the differences in ranks, Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam teaches us to be merciful, affectionate, kind, respectful, and obedient. It is essential to act in line with this teaching in every era, especially in our times.

Every teaching of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is such that if we put it into practice, we will undoubtedly experience success in this world and in the Hereafter. However, the problem we face today is that people are looking for solutions from places where solutions cannot be found. As for the place where the solution is present (i.e. the Qur'ān and Sunnat), we are not turning our attention to it. How, then, can our problems and challenges be solved?

Islam has become an alien entity in the eyes of worldly people, and it has been reduced to a stranger. Islamic teachings are suppressed and people are becoming disinclined to the bearers of the Sunnat (the ʿulamāʾ). Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard:

بدأ الإسلام غريبا وسيعود غريبا كما بدأ، فطوبى للغرباء من أمتي. قيل يا رسول الله، ومن الغرباء من أمتك. قال الذين يصلحون ما أفسد الناس من بعدي من سنتي.[1]

"Islam commenced as a stranger and will return as a stranger . Glad-tidings to the strangers of my community." He was asked: "Who are the strangers of

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[1] كشف الخفاء، ج ١، ص ٢٥٢.

your community?" He replied: "They are the ones who will rectify of my Sunnat what people disfigured."

The author of *al-Madkhal* writes in his commentary to this Hadīth: Look at the theme of this Hadīth, and the one who wants to cry must cry over his self. He must cry over the estrangement of Muslims, and over the subjugation of those who practise on the Sunnat.

An Allāh-fearing and Allāh-conscious ʿālim holds a high rank in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Now who is an Allāh-fearing ʿālim? Listen to the statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this regard. He said: Do not sit in the company of every ʿālim. Rather, sit in the company of the ʿālim who orders you to give up five things and to do five things: (1) He orders you to give up doubts and to adopt conviction. (2) He orders you to give up ostentation and to adopt sincerity. (3) He removes you from love for this world and directs you towards abstinence. (4) He removes you from pride and haughtiness and calls you towards humility. (5) He removes you from enmity and calls you towards advising and admonishing.[1]

In this Hadīth Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* teaches us how to identify an Allāh-fearing ʿālim. He is saying that we must recognize him through his speech and manner of conversing with people. In other words, check if he is calling you towards conviction, sincerity, abstinence, humility, and love and good counsel. In the same way, check if he is removing you from doubts, ostentation, inclination towards the world, pride and enmity. If these encouragements and discouragements are found in his speech, you can

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[1] *Fātihah al-ʿUlūm*, p. 18.

conclude that he is an Allāh-fearing ʿālim. You should remain in his company. If not, stay aloof from him. Understand well that the worst thing which causes ʿulamā' to fall from grace is love for the world.

The despicability of worldly love

It is mentioned in *Fātiḫah al-ʿUlūm* that when the hearts of ʿulamā' become inclined to the world – i.e. they give preference to the world over Dīn – Allāh *taʿālā* snatches away the fountains of wisdom from them and extinguishes the light of guidance from their hearts. When you meet such an ʿālim, he will say to you that he fears Allāh *taʿālā* while his actions are clearly immoral. At such a time you will see how moist and fresh the tongues will be, and how dry and arid the hearts are.

I take an oath in the name of the Being apart from whom there is none worthy of worship, that this condition which I described is solely because of the teachers who did not teach solely for Allāh *taʿālā* and students who did not study solely for Allāh *taʿālā* (in other words, both were devoid of sincerity).

Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "Shayṯān has certainly overpowered you through knowledge." He was asked: "How is that O Rasūlullāh?" He replied: "He says to you: 'Acquire knowledge and do not worry about practising on it until you acquire all knowledge.' Consequently, man becomes desirous of knowledge and strives in acquiring it, while he continues deferring practising on it (by saying, I will do it tomorrow). He even dies in the process but is not inspired towards practice."[1]

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[1] *Fātiḫah al-ʿUlūm*, p. 19.

An advice to beloveds and associates

In the beginning I quoted the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* advised the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* to listen and obey. Because Rasūlullāh's instruction is most appropriate to our present situation, I related it to you. It is not my objective to merely relate it to you but to advise you and make it a bequest to you. Although there is no need for a bequest after that of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, I am advising my people in emulation of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that they must bear in mind all the injunctions of the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and practise on them – especially these two Ahādīth (the Hadīth of Hadrat ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and the Hadīth which mentions showing mercy to the juniors and respecting the seniors…). Special attention must be given to the subject of obedience which is learnt from them because success in this world and in the Hereafter is dependent on it.

Note: Māshā Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* explained and expounded on these two Ahādīth in a most beautiful manner. Only an expert mentor and skilled physician can explain it in this way. Look at how he concluded with a bequest which can only be made by a well-wishing father and mentor. We must make it a point of practising on all this so that we can enjoy success in both worlds. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

PRINCIPLES AND SYSTEMS

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said:

Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* has most appropriate principles for journeys.

There was a wealthy man in Delhi who used to invite students for meals. On one occasion, he extended an invitation to a few very senior teachers. He must have said to them to come on a certain day by a certain train to Delhi, and he will send someone to the station to receive them. Based on this information, these personalities did not even ask him where in Delhi his house is situated. On the appointed date, they all reached Delhi but there was no one to receive them at the station. The man who had invited them forgot. In the meantime, these seniors got off the train and continued walking up and down the platform. They did not even have a large sheet which they could have spread on the ground and sat down. The man eventually remembered, came to the station and took them to his house. It was at this point that these elders spoke among themselves and said: "The principle which is laid down by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is totally correct. Anyone who extends an invitation to him must send a person to accompany him to the place where he has been invited."

An ʿālim was invited by a Maulānā Sāhib. He went to his madrasah and waited there. Those who were opposed to the Maulānā surrounded the madrasah. The madrasah authorities shut the doors from inside. The opposition began hurling verbal abuses from

outside. An associate of Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to live in that city. He was an influential person. He was informed that a certain Maulānā Sāhib is under siege in the madrasah. He arrived immediately with his carriage and called from outside. The Maulānā Sāhib came out and the man took him to his house. The Maulānā Sāhib stayed with the man for three days. He then acknowledged and said: "The principle which is laid down by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* is absolutely correct. When he goes to any place, he stays over at the house of senior and distinguished people." That Maulānā Sāhib must have objected to this principle previously, but realized its wisdom now.

Religious people also have enemies

The fact of the matter is that senior people have even more enemies. If a person is senior in Dīn, he too has enemies. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيْنَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

In this way We made for every Prophet enemies, mischievous humans and jinn.[1]

Hadrat Thānwī's principles

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was returning from Delhi and stopped over at a place (he must have promised someone that he will stop over there for some time). When he got off, he saw a poster which stated that Hadrat Maulānā will be delivering a lecture. He said: "I never said anything about delivering a lecture. How was this announcement

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 112.

made, and who made it?" It was learnt that a western-educated person instructed for this announcement to be made. Hadrat said to him: "You have caused inconvenience to so many Muslims. I am leaving." Everyone begged Hadrat to stay and the man too apologized. Hadrat said: "You must now make a poster informing that you made this announcement without my permission." The man went around and made the announcement. Hadrat used to say: "When he made the announcement, I felt sorry for him because he had to belittle himself. I then said that I will deliver a lecture. Everyone was happy and the man too was overjoyed." Hadrat then delivered an excellent lecture.

There was a Maulānā Sāhib in Delhi. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* went to his place. He too made an announcement for Hadrat's lecture without obtaining permission from him. Hadrat said: "I did not come here to deliver a lecture, and people in their thousands have assembled." Because the Maulānā Sāhib had already made the announcement, he stood up to give the lecture but could not continue. Hadrat too noticed that the Maulānā Sāhib is failing to speak. Hadrat felt sorry for him and delivered the lecture.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* went to Shimlah on one occasion. Many senior people assembled. One wealthy person said to his friend: "These are 'ulamā', but when you look at their clothes it seems as though they have just emerged from the toilet." Hadrat overheard this. When he stood up to deliver his talk, he said: "We have always been hearing that the length of the tail of a turban is according to the extent of a person's knowledge, but today we learnt that it is according to the extent of a person's ignorance." He then said: "How can the Maulwī's afford classy and exclusive clothes!? They do not earn so much that they can

dress to your standards. However, if you are ashamed by the fact that your 'ulamā' are wearing garments which are beneath your status, I can give you a solution for it. You must tailor a few exclusive sets and keep them aside. When any 'ālim or lecturer comes here, you must say to him: 'Hadrat, wear these clothes and deliver the lecture.' When he completes his lecture, you must ask him to remove those clothes and keep them aside. If you really desire the honour of 'ulamā', then you yourself must honour them. If not, you can drown yourselves." Hadrat Maulānā was not normally harsh, but he was highly offended by the man's words that day, this is why he spoke harshly.

Note: Sometimes there is a need to speak harshly to haughty people. This is why Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* spoke as he did on that day. It was exactly what was required for that occasion. A man in Allāhābād had a wedding in his family. He said with regard to our students: "They must come with their broken utensils and take the food from here, we will not send any food for them." When Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* heard this, he was severely displeased and said: "We will not tolerate our students being humiliated in this way." He said very harsh words which we could not imagine. (compiler)

Hadrat Hakimul Ummat *rahimahullāh* went to a place on one occasion. He was not feeling well. He had a flu. The people began speaking among themselves: "The task of noting and publishing his lectures is done by Deputy Sāhib (Hadrat Khwājah 'Azīz al-Hasan Majdhūb *rahimahullāh*). He does not know how to deliver lectures." The next day when Hadrat's condition improved, he delivered a lecture and put the people to shame. He said that these masses attend with their bodies while their hearts are absent. In

other words, they accept outwardly while they have no faith and confidence in their hearts.

One Maulānā S̲āh̲ib was newly appointed in the Department of Arabic at ʿAlīgarh University. Coincidentally, an influential and wealthy person was hosting a function on that day. Many people had gathered, including senior members of the madrasah because the wealthy man was affiliated with the madrasah. He said to the newly-appointed Maulānā S̲āh̲ib: "Maulānā, you have arrived recently and many people have assembled here. We would like you to deliver a talk. It will serve as an opening to the function and we will be able to test you at the same time." The Maulānā S̲āh̲ib said: "Who is going to take my exam?! Do you think you people even have the ability to understand my speech?!" Saying this, the Maulānā called for his attendant, instructed him to pack their luggage, and said: "We are not going to stay here. They have insulted us." When the people saw this, they all apologized and tried to convince him to remain. All the while, the Maulānā S̲āh̲ib expressed his anger and said that he in not going to stay there. They eventually managed to convince him. Subsequently, the Maulānā S̲āh̲ib inspired so much of awe and respect in the minds of the wealthy and affluent people, that several vehicles would be parked outside his house to take him wherever he wanted.

There was a jalsah in one place where many senior people attended. People from ʿAlīgarh were also in attendance. People with top government positions were there. One Maulānā S̲āh̲ib delivered a talk in which he said: "Our madāris produce people who are *marh̲ūmīn* (on whom mercy is shown) while ʿAlīgarh produces people who are *malʿūnīn* (those who are cursed)." All those who were in attendance were most

offended and thought to themselves that he is coming to our very own jalsah and speaking bad about us. The mood of the jalsah was spoilt. When one of the organizers observed the change in mood, he went to Hadrat Hakimul Ummat *rahimahullāh* who was the head and said: “Hadrat, you will have to set right the mood.” Hadrat said: “Why don’t you say something?” The man did as instructed but it was not easy for him to change the mood of the audience.

Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* then addressed them: “Various types of people have assembled here. Some of you are judges, while others hold senior positions. I ask you, how many criminals did you let go on the basis of their good intentions? [You certainly released many]. If this is the case, then I ask you, what do you think of this Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib? Does he have good intentions or not?” The people realized their folly from this one sentence and were satisfied. They were saying among themselves: “Look at what a beautiful thing he said! (he is labelling the Maulānā Sāhib a criminal and saying that we are the ones who released him).” The mood of the audience changed.

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then said: “You people talk a lot about *fitrat* (temperament) but you do not understand it. One was the *fitrat* of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the other was the *fitrat* of Hadrat ʿĪsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Yet another was the *fitrat* of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*. Each one had a different temperament. If this is the case, why don’t you liken the temperament of Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib to that of Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*?” When they heard this, the people began smiling while Maulānā Ibrāhīm Sāhib began crying (he was probably thinking that he

was not worthy of being compared to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*).

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* added: "You people always talk about 'new light'. What does it mean? Doesn't it mean that old things must be seen in a new light? Based on this rule, we will not use the word 'cursed' [as was said by the Maulānā Sāhib with reference to the graduates of 'Alīgarh]. Instead, we will say 'far from mercy'."

The people were overjoyed with Hadrat's speech. The fact of the matter is that he used to say things which these western educated people were ready to accept and they acknowledged that Hadrat has the full right of being accepted as a mentor and an educator.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* adds:

From these incidents you can gauge the extent of Hadrat Maulānā's affection and soft-heartedness. People are wrong in claiming that he is harsh. If he did reprimand any person, it was for the person's own rectification. On the whole he was very soft-hearted. He was harsh at the times of necessity. Was salām.

LEVELS OF WORK

If work is done in the correct manner, it will certainly be fruitful. If you do work in the manner done by the Auliyā', you will receive ranks accordingly. What this means is that you will have to subjugate your desires to the Sharīʿat.

But listen! It is very easy to say that you will have to subjugate your desires, but when a person tries to do it, he realizes that it is extremely difficult. It is not for everyone. Yes, if Allāh's grace is directed at a person, it becomes easy for him. Therefore each person, no matter of what level he is, must work according to his level. This is what I constantly say to people – they must do as much as they can, and they must not get embroiled in what they cannot do. There will be some other servant of Allāh *taʿālā* who will convey the work to the next level. A person has to do what is within his capacity. If a person wants to do the work which the Auliyā' did without learning it, how will he ever be able to achieve this? This is why I said to the people of this place to do the work in the correct manner. I also showed them the way to do the work. Those who do the work in the prescribed manner will be conferred ranks in line with the level of the work which they did.

A word of advice for the shaykh

I say, the murīds have a certain amount of faith and conviction in their shaykhs. If the shaykhs have the same amount of faith and conviction in their murīds, the latter will reach Allāh *taʿālā*. What this means is that we see the murīds sacrificing everything for us – their time, their occupations, eating and drinking,

sleeping and waking up, rest and comfort, and so on. Now if we too pay a little attention to them, they will reach their goal. The shaykh has to be concerned about the condition of his murīd. Is he progressing spiritually or not. If he is, well and good. If he is not, the shaykh must remove the obstacles which are preventing him from progressing. He must clear the way for him. This is what I mean by the attention of the shaykh to his murīd.

There was a very senior and distinguished ʿālim by Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. On one occasion, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* mentioned him by name and said: "Our Maulwī Sāhib talks a lot." Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then said: "Inshā Allāh, now he will not talk." Subsequently, we noticed him remaining silent all the time and he began benefiting from Hadrat *rahimahullāh* and was successful in this regard. After this, he used to say: "Even if I want to speak, I feel as if someone is holding my tongue." I say, it was not only his tongue which was held but his heart was held by someone. Consequently, his tongue stopped saying useless and futile things."

Some tasks are easy while others are difficult. External knowledge is easy while internal knowledge is difficult. The evils of the carnal self are exposed after a long time. There was a saint who always performed his salāh in the first row. One day he got delayed. He was able to join the congregation but he got place in the second row. He felt ashamed about it with respect to the people. In other words, they will say: "Today the shaykh missed the first row and the first takbīr." From this thought he realized that whatever salāhs he performed to this day were performed for people, and not for Allāh *taʿālā*. He then began making qadā of all his past salāhs. Just

imagine what intention he must have made! I related this incident to show you that the plots and schemes of the carnal self are exposed after a long time. Hadrat Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> From the qualities of a person, the level of his knowledge can be ascertained in just one day. However, one must never be satisfied by his internal self and must never be deceived by it. This is because the depravity of the carnal self cannot be fathomed even after many years.

The importance of subjugating the self

Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rahimahullāh* suffered from an ailment whose intensity would cause him to fall unconscious. In those days there was a yogi who used to extract the ailment. Hadrat suffered from a severe bout on one occasion, so his murīds wanted to take him to the yogi. On the way, Hadrat regained consciousness. He asked: "Where are you taking me?" They replied: "To such and such yogi." He said: "No. Let's go back." The people took him back. He then suffered another attack which was severer than the previous one. The people decided that they will have to take him to the yogi because he is in real discomfort. They took him and reached the place of the yogi. The yogi extracted the ailment and Hadrat woke up and sat up. Hadrat asked the yogi: "How did you acquire this skill?" He replied: "Our guru had advised us to act against our carnal self. I practised on his advice and acquired this skill in this way."

Hadrat asked: "Tell me, does your self want you to embrace Islam or not?" The yogi was terrified by this question because how can a kāfir say that he likes Islam. This is why he replied in the negative. Hadrat

asked: “Your guru taught you to act against your self. Now is this included in his instruction or not?” The yogi was stunned but because he was true to his principles, he acknowledged and said: “This is undoubtedly included.” He read the kalimah and became a Muslim. Once īmān entered his heart and he looked at Hadrat, he saw and realized that Hadrat was on a very lofty level. So he sat respectfully in front of him.

The story spread throughout Delhi that Hadrat used his powers to overpower the yogi and caused a very senior kāfir to become a Muslim. Now there were other personalities and saints in Delhi but they could not cause “small” kāfirs to become Muslims, yet Allāh *taʿālā* enabled Hadrat to accomplish this.

This is what I meant when I said that there are different levels of work. A person can only do as much as is equal to his rank and level. If a junior person wants to accomplish the works of seniors, he will not be able to do it.

Now listen further! All types of people – the rich and the poor – used to go to Hadrat Nizām ad-Dīn Auliyā’ *rahimahullāh*. There was a man who was sitting at the rear of Hadrat’s assembly. He said: “There is no question about Hadrat being a Walī. At the same time there is no question about us being wretched people. Let alone reaching high levels of Dīn, we cannot even give up sins.” The man’s condition began to change after that. He himself used to relate: “Hadrat pulled me [towards Allāh *taʿālā*] in such a manner that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot.” Hadrat must have focussed on him, which then caused the condition of his heart to change.

Work has to be done in the prescribed manner. One way of doing it is to take a region and initiate a

programme of reformation and rectification. After working there for some time, form a group [which is capable of doing the work] so that in your absence, those who learnt the work from you will be able to continue it and give it progress. Let it not happen that you go to one place for two days, then you go to another place, and so on. How will anyone benefit in this way? The Sufis did a lot of work during periods of retrogression of the ummat. And wherever they did the work, they did it with resoluteness and fortitude. They did not deliver half a lecture today and said that they will deliver the remaining half tomorrow. Then when he stood up to deliver the second half the next day, the people forgot what he had said the previous day. The work must be so well established, that when you go back to a place, you must find it having progressed. In this way, it will be easy to convey the work to the next level.

If work is done with sincerity, people will pay heed

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said on one occasion: "Continue doing the work and people will pay heed." Maulānā ʿAbd al-Ghanī Sāhib and I were present at the time when he gave this piece of advice. What he meant was that the essential thing is work and sincerity. When a person does the work and does it with sincerity, people are bound to turn to him. You will therefore see that those who did the work were widely accepted by the Muslims. People were prepared to shed their blood at the spot where their perspiration fell. This is because they taught them Dīn with utmost sincerity and love. They taught them in a manner which caused them to become true lovers of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Muslims made a major contribution in India. The work was done by the ‘ulamā’ and the Sufis. You see Maulwī Muhammad Fārūq Sāhib sitting here. He came from Allāhābāh Utrā’u. On one occasion I went to his village, and he took me to a nearby village[1] where there was a most imposing masjid, a graveyard, and a solidly built khānqāh. I asked him: “How come this small village has such a beautiful and imposing masjid?!”

He replied that there is a background to it. An accountant from Lucknow used to come and stay here. He asked the saint whose grave this is to make du‘ā’ for him. The saint extended his ink-stand to him. This was an indication that he was giving him the ink-stand for the ministry, and he will become a minister. Subsequently he became a minister. He is the one who had this masjid and graveyard constructed. From here we can see that the Sufis even gave the world to people. As for the Dīn and īmān which they give and convey, that is beyond description. If you want sainthood, you will have to do some work. Sainthood is a good thing, but do you know what you have to do to acquire it? It comes with blood and sweat, and intense toiling.

What I want to say is that if you want to see real Dīn in people, you will have to do the work in the prescribed manner. You will have to teach, instruct and train. Do you think the work will be done just like that on its own!?

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[1] This village is called Dumgarhā, and the saint’s name is Shāh Bāsit ‘Alī Qalandar.

In order to teach it to others you will have to learn it yourself under someone. Now that we are talking about learning and teaching, I recall an incident:

There was a saint who was an eminent scholar. A Nawāb S̲āh̲ib used to study under him. When, as per his schedule, he came to study one day, he observed some debility on his teacher's face, so he said: "H̲ad̲rat, I do not feel like studying today." Saying this, he went to his house, had several exotic and fortifying meals prepared, placed them on his head, and brought them personally to his teacher. The scholar smiled and said: "You brought it at the time of need but I am not going to eat it because the thing which is obtained after waiting expectantly for it and hankering after it is unlawful. When you left here, the thought crossed my mind that you went to bring food. Since this food came after I waited expectantly for it, I will not eat it."

The Nawāb S̲āh̲ib did not insist. He picked up the tray and left. When he was out of sight, he turned back and returned. He said: "H̲ad̲rat, you will have to accept it now because there is no hankering or waiting expectantly now." The scholar accepted. He was most pleased by his student's intelligence and made a lot of du'ā' for him.

Did you see how the student saved his teacher from hankering while making him to eat the food as well. If it was anyone from today, he would have either insisted on the teacher to accept or he would have taken it and left. Look at his intelligence – he took the food and left, but returned. And when he returned, he made a most valid point which the teacher had to acknowledge. This is true intelligence which we are not learning.

THE NEED FOR SYSTEM AND ORGANIZATION

Whether a task is big or small, it cannot be done without a system. A system is essential for every type of work. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had a system for everything, and would teach the same to us. He used to say: "When a person writes to me with a request for bayʿat, I call for him and say: 'Your request is accepted, but you must come to me after zuhr salāh when I am sitting in the exterior lounge, and present this letter to me." A person would then go and present it. Hadrat used to say: "If I happened to ask a person to come and meet me at some other time, I would tie a knot in my handkerchief to serve as a reminder. I carry it with me all the time, and when my hand falls on the knot, I think to myself: 'Why did I tie this knot?' I then recall that I had called a certain person for bayʿat."

I related this incident to demonstrate to you that even if it is the smallest of tasks, if attention is not paid to it and a system is not adopted for it, it will not be done. I say further, a system will develop through salāh. If you are particular about salāh, then all your work – whether of this world or the Hereafter – will be set right. A person can become a totally organized person solely through salāh. Those who are particular about their salāh and punctual about it become punctual about all other tasks.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to pay attention to salāh one hour

before its time. A person obtains īmān from salāh. the Qur’ān refers to salāh as īmān:

وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُضِيْعَ اِيْمَانَكُمْ

Allāh is not such as to allow your īmān to go to waste.

The exegetes state that it means:

أَيْ صَلَاتَكُمْ

In other words, your salāh.

The background to this is that when the qiblah was changed, the thought crossed the minds of the Muslims that the salāhs which they had performed in the direction of the qiblah which has now been abrogated are probably lost [in other words, they have lost the rewards for those salāhs]. Allāh *taʿālā* sent this verse stating that Allāh will not allow your salāhs to go to waste. Rather, He will reward you for them.

Do not consider salāh to be insignificant

You consider salāh to be insignificant while it is an obligation to Allāh *taʿālā*. You are deprived of its blessings today because you have wrong thoughts about it. You should develop full conviction in it and perform it with conviction, and then see what benefits you experience. If you have no faith and confidence in a thing, what benefit will you ever derive from it!

Salāh is the miʿrāj of the believers. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* received it on the occasion of Miʿrāj. Initially, 50 salāhs were made compulsory. On his return, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* met Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām*

who asked him: “What did you get?” He replied: “50 times salāh has been made compulsory.”[1]

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: “This is too much, your ummat will not be able to fulfil this. Go back to Allāh *taʿālā* and ask for a reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back and requested a reduction. Allāh *taʿālā* reduced it by five. On his return, he met Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* again. He asked: “What happened?” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informed him that the number of salāhs was reduced by five. He said: “Go back and ask for a further reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back and requested a reduction. It was reduced by another five. He continued in this way – going to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and then back to Allāh *taʿālā* for a further reduction, and it was reduced by five on each request. Eventually only ten remained. When he went to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and informed him that the number is now ten, Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said: “It is still too much. Go back and ask for a reduction.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* went back. Allāh *taʿālā* reduced it by another five, and so only five remained. Allāh *taʿālā* said to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*: “Although it is only five, I will give the reward for fifty.” In other words, one salāh will be recorded as ten. From this, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* gauged that a further reduction does not have Allāh’s approval. When he went to Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* and informed him of what transpired, he said: “It is still too much. I have experience with the Banī Isrāʾīl. They could not perform just two salāhs – one in the morning and one in the evening.

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[1] *Tafsīr Mazharī*, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ.

How will your ummat perform five salāhs?” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: “No matter what, I am not going back for a further reduction. I went too many times with these requests for a reduction. I am now feeling ashamed to go back.”

People do not believe in the sanctity and saintliness of salāh

This is the history of your salāh. What a magnificent worship! Despite this, you do not believe in its saintliness. I do not know what people consider to be saintliness. The Sharīʿat has been brought to us by Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The ʿulamā’ are its protectors and they understand it. The Sufis revert to the ʿulamā’ to learn matters about Dīn and the Sharīʿat. It is nothing but the thievery of Shaytān that has decreased the greatness of the Sharīʿat, salāh, fasting, etc. from your hearts. You probably consider saintliness to be when a person flies in the air. So listen to what the erudite Sufis have to say in this regard.

How to look for a qualified shaykh

The method of searching for a qualified shaykh is to continue meeting different mashā’ikh without rejecting or finding fault with anyone. At the same time, do not pledge bayʿat without investigating. First observe the shaykh’s steadfastness on the Sharīʿat. If you find one who does not adhere to the Sharīʿat, never pledge bayʿat to him even if he performs supernatural feats because the performance of supernatural feats is not from among the essentials of being a walī. There were some Auliyā’ who did not perform a single supernatural act. There are no reports of supernatural feats from the majority of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Whereas the lowest

Sahābī is superior to all the Auliyā'. We learn from this that the superiority of one walī over another is not on the basis of supernatural feats but on servitude and worship. Supernatural feats are performed by yogis as well. Thus, supernatural feats cannot be made proofs for wilāyat (true and close friendship with Allāh *taʿālā*).

There is a well-known story in this regard and you probably heard it. A yogi was flying in the air. When a saint saw this, he feared that the beliefs of many people will become corrupted. They will think that the yogi is a saint who has reached Allāh *taʿālā*, whereas he is not even a believer. The saint removed his sandal and caused it to fly in the air. It went to the yogi and began striking him on his head. It continued doing this until it forced him to come down. When the people saw this, they realized that he was not a genuine saint.

The Sufis who were on the true path followed the Sunnat and encouraged those who frequented them to do the same. They said that the real supernatural act is to remain steadfast on the Sharīʿat. As for what the people consider to be supernatural feats, they disregarded them totally and did not allow their murīds to think anything of them. The author of *ʿAwārif* writes:

> Allāh *taʿālā* confers supernatural feats to some saints and not to others, while the latter are superior to the former. Hadrat Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* writes that some of the Auliyā' who performed many supernatural feats expressed the wish at the end of their lives: "If only so many supernatural feats were not performed through us."

> The saints in every era endeavoured – through their actions and words - to make the people realize that the Sharīʿat is the fundamental thing, and that they should not focus on kashf (exposition) and karāmāt (supernatural feats). If they make supernatural feats the criteria for saintliness, they will fall into severe deviation and misguidance. One saint said: "To fly in the air and walk on water is of no consequence." He expresses this in a most beautiful way. He says: "If you fly in the air you will be like a fly because it too flies in the air. And if you walk on water, you will be no better than straw and dry grass because these too float on water. If you want to become a man of Allāh, you will have to take your heart in your hand, i.e. set right your heart and rectify it so that you become a perfect human."

Did you see how beautifully our ʿulamā' and Sufis cleansed our minds of these things (supernatural feats and expositions) which have been misleading people in every era.

The difference between mesmerizing and karāmat

Similarly, a saint fully exposed the difference between mesmerism and karāmat through his actions. This is how he did it: There was a person who used to mesmerize people by dissolving while he was sitting in front of them. In other words, he would disappear right before their eyes. A few drops of water would be seen on the spot where he had been sitting. When one saint saw him do this, he thought to himself that this

man is going to lead astray many people through his mesmerism. He said to the people: “When this man turns into water, you must take a cloth and absorb those drops of water and absorb my drops as well. You must then smell both.” The people did as they were told. When they inhaled the drops of the man, they got the stench of urine. When they inhaled the drops of the saint, they got the fragrance of perfume. He wanted to demonstrate to them that although the two appear to be the same, there is a world of difference in the reality of the two. Urine and rose water are both liquids yet one is impure and the other is pure. If there is an impurity on some clothes, it can be washed off with rose water and with urine. However, when it is washed with rose water, the garment will become clean and pure. When it is washed with urine, the impurity may be removed but it will not be purified.

The ʿulamā’ have gone at length in speaking on these subjects, and they did it solely because of a Dīnī need. Qāḏī Thanā’ullāh Ṣāḥib Pānīpattī *raḥimahullāh* has quoted a question and answer on this subject in *Irshād aṯ-Ṯālibīn*. He writes:

Someone may ask the question that if a supernatural feat is not a prerequisite for being a walī, how will we know that the person is in fact a walī?

Ḥaḏrat Mujaddid Alf Thānī *raḥimahullāh* has given two answers.

First of all there is no need to find out the wilāyat of a walī. Wilāyat is a special affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* irrespective of whether anyone knows about it or not. Most Auliyā’ are not even aware of their own wilāyat, what can be said of outsiders! They will see the fruits of their wilāyat after they die. Supernatural feats and miracles are actually needed by Prophets *ʿalayhimus*

salām. When they invite people towards Allāh *taʿālā*, they have to prove that they are Prophets. On the other hand, when Auliyā invite towards Allāh *taʿālā*, they invite to the Sharīʿat of the Prophet. Therefore, the miracle of the Prophet is enough for the walī when he invites. The ʿulamā' and jurists invite to the external Sharīʿat. The Auliyā' first invite their murīds to adopt the external Sharīʿat. After that they say to them: Spend your time in Allāh's remembrance so that His remembrance takes precedence and thoughts about anyone else do not enter the heart. There is absolutely no need for a karāmat for this invitation.

The second answer is that as a murīd continues experiencing changes in his condition, he observes and sees the karāmat of his shaykh in these changes. It is the shaykh who revived his dead heart and exposed so many things to him. The masses consider the reviving of dead people to be a great feat, whereas the elite say that reviving the soul and heart is of essence. Thus, in the sight of the murīd, the karāmat is there before him, while the masses have no need for it.[1]

Did you see what a beautiful explanation he gave! But people in general only understand the external things. This is what is of value to them. What do they know about the life of the heart and soul. Just think for yourselves that if the body comes to life, of what benefit is it? But if the heart comes to life, then that is the real thing. The heart coming to life means that Allāh's remembrance and love becomes embedded in it. The effect of this is that a man is alive even after he dies. A poet says:

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[1] *Tuhfah as-Sālikīn*, p. 13.

> The heart which has come to life because of Allāh's love never dies. Eternity and continuity are recorded for it.

It is not easy to explain these subjects in our times. I started speaking on these things here in Mumbai, so I will explain them to you. If even two people understand what I say, I will conclude that my coming here was productive. The reason why it is difficult to understand these subjects is that this is an era of rejection. I do not know what people think is the criterion for saintliness, but the true scholars say that following the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the criterion for saintliness.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* says:

> O Saʿdī! Do not think that the path can be traversed without following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Understand well that anyone who treads a path different from that of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh* says:

> If a person hasn't found the path to Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and has not chosen it, then even if he continues walking until the day of Resurrection, then let alone reaching Allāh *taʿālā,* he will not even get the dust of His path.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh* writes in *Maktūbāt Quddūsīyyah*:

> By following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, every walī acquires a special

> position which another person cannot acquire. In fact, the latter cannot even understand it.

He says further on:

> If this is the case, no one should reject because rejecting the mashā'ikh results in deprivation. A rejecter cannot reach any rank. He experiences nothing but humiliation and disgrace.

Rejecting the Sufis causes deprivation

The author of *'Awārif* says that any person who rejects has gone astray and transgressed the limit. As for the one who affirms, then even if he does not reach the rank of the Auliyā', the affirmation which brought him into the service of the Auliyā' will convey him to the excellences of the Auliyā' and make him an 'ārif (a true recognizer) of Allāh *ta'ālā*.

Look at how much the senior scholars feared rejection. Despite this, rejection has become the most beloved occupation today. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* has written extensively on this subject. He says that it is the rule with worldly people that if a sweeper takes a drum and announces: "This is the order of the king…", then people accept it without any hesitation and complaint. No one will say to him: "You claim to bring this order from the king, where is the proof for it?" But if the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh say something about the Dīn to a person, he is not prepared to accept it. They will make countless objections against the person and ask him to present a proof for his saintliness. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says: "This is a most strange and absurd thing! People will accept something which is related to

this world with their eyes closed, but present countless excuses to accept something related to Dīn.”

Note: Hadrat Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* also wrote that if Muhammad ibn Zakarīyyā (who was a hakīm, a physician) were to speak about the effects and benefits of a certain herbal plant, people accept his words without hesitation. But when Hadrat Muhammad ibn ʻAbdillāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam* says something, people demand a proof and are not prepared to accept it. It is most unfortunate. (compiler)

Qādī Thanā'ullāh Sāhib Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh* writes in *Irshād at-Tālibīn* that these people say: If the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʻālā* were His beloved servants, they would have known the unseen. And because they do not have knowledge of worldly things, how can they ever have knowledge of the celestial world!? The hypocrites used to say similar things about Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʻalayhi wa sallam*.

As a result of their corrupt thoughts (objections and rejections), these people are deprived of the blessings of the friends of Allāh *taʻālā*. They haven't realized this much that Allāh *taʻālā* is most protective of His friends in the sense that He does not allow them to be occupied in anyone apart from Him.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

> I do not know the prescribed scales of poetry. Despite this, my poems are superior to the elixir of life. When I think of composing a couplet, my Beloved says to me: Do not focus your mind on anything apart from Me (I will put your couplet in order). All you have to do is focus entirely on Me.

Listen to this story in this regard:

Muhammad ibn ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Qaswā – the camel of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – walked away from the other camels and disappeared out of sight. The Muslims went in all directions looking for it. Zayd ibn Silah, a hypocrite, was sitting with a group of Ansār which included ʿUbādah ibn Bishr ibn Waqs *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and Hudayr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He asked: "Where are these people running around?" Some people informed him that the camel of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is gone missing and they are searching for it. He said: "He is a Prophet of Allāh, why does Allāh *taʿālā* not inform him of the whereabouts of his camel?" The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were offended by this statement. They said: "O enemy of Allāh! May Allāh destroy you. You have become a hypocrite." Hadrat Usayd ibn Hudayr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* went towards him and said: "By Allāh, I would have pierced your stomach with this spear, but the only thing which is stopping me is that I do not know if my action will meet Rasūlullāh's approval. Nonetheless, I will say this much to you: If such filth is filled in your self, why did you come with us in the first place?"

He replied: "I came for the sake of booty." He continued making other objectionable statements. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "May Allāh *taʿālā* make it such that we are never together and may He not gather us under the same shade. Had we known what is in your heart, we would never have brought you with us." He fled from there when he heard this. He feared they will kill him and seize all his possessions. He proceeded directly to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and sought his refuge. In the meantime, Hadrat Jibra'īl *ʿalayhis salām* came with divine revelation to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi*

wa sallam. Rasūlullāh s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said (while the hypocrite was listening to him): "A man from the hypocrites has said that the camel of Rasūlullāh s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is gone missing but Allāh *taʿālā* did not inform him of its whereabouts. By Allāh! Muh̲ammad s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* informs of things which are far superior to a camel. None but Allāh *taʿālā* has knowledge of the unseen, but Allāh *taʿālā* has informed me of its whereabouts. It is in a certain mountain pass which is not far from where you are. Its bridle got stuck to a tree."

The people went to that spot, found the camel there and brought it back.

A hypocrite becomes a sincere Muslim

The hypocrite was quite remorseful when he saw this. He got up quickly and went to his companions while he was staggering. They were all sitting as they had been; no one had moved from his place. When he approached them they said: "Don't you dare come near us." He said: "I have something to say." Saying this, he went closer to them and said: "I take an oath in Allāh's name and ask you if any of you went to Muh̲ammad s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and informed him of anything about me?" They replied: "By Allāh, we did not even get up from our places." He said: "(It is most surprising) that what I said had remained here among us and was not conveyed to anyone else. Yet Rasūlullāh s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made mention of it." He added: "I had been in doubt about Muh̲ammad s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* up until now, but now I testify that Muh̲ammad s̲*allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the Messenger of Allāh, and you can conclude from this that I have become a Muslim today."

The people said to him: "Go to Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and seek his pardon, and he will seek forgiveness for you." He presented himself before Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, sought his forgiveness and acknowledged his sins."

Although this hypocrite acknowledged his errant ways and became a Muslim, there have always been people making objections against the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and then against the Auliyā' who came after them. They hurt these personalities but the latter remained patient, while those who made objections died without repenting.

When I was in my hometown, I advised the youngsters and said to them: "I am not asking you for anything else. All I want you to do is hold on to s̲alāh and be particular about its performance. Then see if your condition changes or not." And so, some people of a very nearby inhabitancy started performing s̲alāh. But then they came to me and said that people were laughing and mocking at them. I said to them that they must exercise patience. At the same time I sent a message to the ringleader [who was mocking at these people] that there is now war between him and me until the day of Resurrection. Someone went and conveyed this message to him and he became scared. He came with another person to me and sought pardon. He came on foot. He said to his companion: "Because we are going to seek pardon, we will have to go on foot."

When he came to me, I treated him with softness. He acknowledged and said: "It is correct that I mock at them but I am not the only one; there are many others." I said: "You are right and I am aware of it. This has become the condition of Muslims today." When Muslims will put an end to their occupations of

salāh, fasting, Allāh's remembrance, Qur'ān recitation, reading about the conditions of the saints, reading their statements and teachings, disregarding the Hereafter and so on; they will devote their time to backbiting, complaining about and maligning the seniors of Dīn. This will become their occupation and they will succumb to destruction, as his happening at present.

The saints have written that when the hearts become accustomed to turning away from Allāh *taʿālā*, backbiting about the Auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā* becomes their inseparable condition. We learn from this that when a person's affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā* is correct, speaking about the Auliyā' becomes beloved to him. If not, the opposite will happen. That is, he thoroughly enjoys backbiting them.

The condition in a certain village

'Ulamā' used to go to the same village but the people would not even perform salāh. After I started frequenting that place, they began performing salāh. Subsequently, many of them became regular performers of tahajjud salāh. An incident occurred in that village. I sent a message to the people that I am astonished that such an incident occurred there. They apologized and said: "You already know what type of people we were. It is because of you that the people developed some concern for Dīn. It was you who came and taught us Dīn. Before this, no one came and spoke of such things. The people have immense faith and confidence in you, they did not have such faith and confidence for anyone before you." I said: "These people are right. When Dīn and its fundamentals will not be taught, how will people learn it on their own? They will neither know the Sharīʿat nor will they

recognize Wilāyat. They will not understand the greatness of salāh and fasting."

I will explain all these things to you people as well. I commenced with salāh, so now I am saying to you to commence with salāh and to be punctual about it. Salāh itself will demonstrate its rank to you. People in the past were very particular about salāh. Stories of even kings and their adherence to salāh will leave you astounded.

King Shujā'

Shāh Shujāʿ Kirmānī was a very religious king. He had resolved to get his daughter married to a religious man.

He was travelling to some place on one occasion and his gaze fell on a youngster who was performing salāh. The king was attracted to his salāh, so he stood there watching him. When he completed his salāh, he called him and asked: "If Shāh Kirmānī offers his daughter in marriage to you will you accept?" He replied: "Keep silent, what you are saying!? Do you want me to get beaten?" He said: "I am Shujāʿ Kirmānī. I am attracted to your salāh. I want to get you married to my daughter in exchange for your salāh."

The youngster fell silent. Shāh Shujāʿ confirmed the marriage of his daughter to the young man there and then.

I related this incident to demonstrate to you that salāh and fasting are not ordinary things. People accomplished much through them. They accumulated of the world and Dīn through them.

Note: We make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable us to develop full confidence in this teaching of Hadrat

Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, and to bless us with the good of Dīn and the world. Āmīn. (compiler)

The blessing of worship

Now listen to another incident:

A person went to a masjid and began performing salāh with the sole intention that people will consider him to be pious and he will be able to get married to the daughter of a wealthy man. But no one bothered about him. He thought to himself: I am striving so much just for this world, but no one is even asking about me. Why, then, should I not do all this for Allāh's sake. He rectified his intention after this. No sooner he rectified his intention, the following day a wealthy man offered his daughter in marriage to him by saying: "You seem to be a pious and righteous man, and an ardent worshipper and ascetic. I therefore want to offer my daughter in marriage to you."

Now that honesty had entered his heart, he said: "O people! listen! I am speaking frankly to you. I came to this masjid and adhered to worship in the hope that I will be able to marry the daughter of a wealthy man. As long as this was my intention, no one even bothered about me. When I received inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* and I rectified my intention, began worshipping Him solely for His pleasure and established a bond with Him, you too turned your attention to me. I am saying to you: Now that I have found Allāh *taʿālā*, I have no desire to establish any other relationship. So please excuse me."

A person refuses trusteeship of Bayt al-Maqdis

A person went into iʿtikāf (seclusion) so that he could become a trustee of Bayt al-Maqdis. No one even turned in his direction. With this corrupt intention, the man continued in his ostentatious worship but could not realize his objective. One day the thought crossed his mind that he is bearing so much for this worship but no one is bothering to even ask about him. Why, then, should he not engage in worship for Allāh *taʿālā* so that he could acquire His pleasure. No sooner he changed his intention, people came and requested him to become a trustee of Bayt al-Maqdis. He replied: "I had been waiting for the day when you people would come and offer me this trusteeship, but when you did not pay any attention to me, I emptied my heart and focussed on Allāh *taʿālā*. When I removed this thought from my heart, you people came to me to offer the trusteeship to me. Please excuse me and appoint someone else as a trustee."

You learnt from these incidents that there are differences in the actions of a sincere person and one who is ostentatious. An ostentatious person does the same action for the world while the world turns away from him. On the other hand, a sincere person does it for Allāh *taʿālā*, the creation turns to him and is desirous of him, while he has already acquired Allāh's pleasure.

May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us all with the treasure of sincerity, and protect us against ostentation and haughtiness. Āmīn.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DU'Ā

I received a phone call from my sons, Maulwī Saʿīd A͟hmad Nadwī and Maulwī ʿAzīz A͟hmad Qāsmī, who said that the situation in Syria is quite volatile. There is a need for special duʿā'. My heart became restless and anxious, and I commenced making duʿā'.

I am presenting an article of Maulānā Asrār al-H̲aqq S̲ā͟hib Qāsmī which sheds light on the situation.

Ever since the Syrian civil war commenced in 2011, over 300 000 lives were lost in a period of six years. About 17½ million people – which is more than half the total population – have been forced to leave their homes. Hundreds of thousands have left the country to seek asylum in different parts of the world where they are facing countless difficulties and hardships. The tyrant Syrian despot, Bashshār al-Asad, has resorted to chemical weapons which he rained down on the innocent children, women and old people of Aleppo, in the name of putting an end to the rebels. All sound-minded people of the world are left aghast by the atrocities. Tears are flowing from their eyes and they are left speechless. The bombs and chlorine gases did not only snatch away the lives of the residents of the city, rather thousands of poverty-stricken citizens have succumbed to their death. If they did not die immediately, they had to face their death in hospitals. In the city which has been reduced to ruins, the soldiers of Asad went on a wide scale rampage of raping women. The present catastrophe and tragedy must be putting to shame the souls of tyrants and despots like Hulaku Khān, Chengis Khān, Hitler and Mussolini.

Even if it may be out of a consideration to international demands, the eternal enemy of Islam and Muslims – the Israeli state – also labelled Asad a despot and tyrant after witnessing the devastation of Syrian cities. It added that by using chemical weapons against his own people, this despot must not only be removed from office but expelled from his country.

Maulānā Asrār al-Haqq Sāhib Qāsmī then related some terrifying incidents which let alone quoting here, we do not have the courage to read them.

During the same period, I was reading a most important article of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which was written in 1966. It is most appropriate to the present situation. In it, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* provides a treatment for this pain. My heart desires to include it at the end of volume two of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* so that the Muslim community may be immediately directed towards this treatment. Read it attentively, and adopt the treatment and medication. He said:

Listen! The Muslims were controlling the entire world. There was no power to combat them. The Christians were subjugated with the exception of just one Christian king who wielded his authority. On one occasion, the caliph left the capital with only 20 000 soldiers when the Christian king suddenly advanced with an army of 100 000. When the caliph spoke about making peace with him, he replied with all his pride and haughtiness: "Leave aside all talks of peace. We will only talk when we reach the capital." The caliph consulted the ʿulamā'. One senior ʿālim said: "You are our leader. You must lead us in the jumuʿah salāh, after which we will all turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and make duʿā' to Him. We have an army of 20 000 and a Hadīth states that 12 000 Muslims will not be

defeated on account of being lesser in number. Fight the enemy and Allāh *taʿālā* will help us."

The caliph led the people in the jumuʿah salāh. He then made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* with such devotion and submission that all the soldiers were left sobbing. A horse was prepared for the caliph. After the duʿā', he mounted his horse and advanced towards the enemy. He was at the front while his army followed. The Muslims attacked with such force that the enemy was left scattered. The Christian king was captured and the Muslims received immense booty.

Did you see! An army of just 20 000 vanquished an enemy of 100 000. This was solely the blessing of the duʿā'. Even today the Muslims are not less in number. They must turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and cry and beg before Him. His mercy can be showered on them today as well.

Note: If only the Muslims of today could develop firm faith and total reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. If they can do this, they will succeed. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

When the torments of the Quraysh of Makkah had reached the peak and they also refused the Muslims to emigrate to Madīnah Munawwarah, the Muslims resorted to duʿā'. The Qur'ān relates the duʿā' which they made:

رَبَّنَآ أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا ج وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا لا وَّاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا

O our Lord! Remove us from this village whose people are oppressors, and appoint for us, from You, a supporter, and appoint for us, from You, a helper."[1]

You must then see how Allāh *taʿālā* sends His help from the unseen as He helped those who were before you. You should at least cry and beg before Allāh *taʿālā* as your predecessors did. Allāh *taʿālā* sent a magnificent bounty for us Muslims – when we are worried and helpless, we must make duʿā' to Him.

There is no battle before which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not make duʿā'. When he experienced any painful situation, he used to resort to duʿā'.

Muslims can never be victorious through their strength alone. They have to make duʿā'. When the Muslims looked at their large numbers, they had to suffer defeat. On the occasion of the Battle of Uhud, it was Rasūlullāh's view to remain within Madīnah and face the enemy. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* said: "We are big in number. We will go out and stop the enemy." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* put on his weapons and went out, but the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* thought to themselves that since Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was inclined to remain in Madīnah, we should not have expressed a view contrary to his. They expressed these thoughts to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but he said that once a Prophet wears his weapons, it is not permissible for him to remove them. Subsequently, the Muslims had to suffer some loss.

On the occasion of the Battle of Hunayn, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* thought about their large number,

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 75.

so they had to suffer an initial setback, although they were victorious after that. We learn from this that whenever Muslims left aside their reliance on Allāh *taʿālā* and focused on the means, they suffered defeat. The means are nothing; Muslims have to focus on Allāh *taʿālā*.

Even now we have immense treasures – we have Allāh’s Book and we have the Ah̲ādīth of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Even if we are nothing, we can accomplish a lot through Allāh’s help.

I feel that the way forward for Muslims is to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* with honesty and sincerity, and to become true believers. Furthermore, we must have full conviction in the promises which Allāh *taʿālā* made in favour of the believers. Now is not the time to suffice with listening to superficial lectures. There is a need to listen to lectures for the sake of īmān and actions. Can there be a worse situation than this? If Muslims still do not turn towards good actions, when will they ever do?

Note: The Muslims are presently (2016) faced with a far worse situation than what H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* is making reference to (1966). Muslims are suffering everywhere. The situation in places like Egypt and Syria is getting from bad to worse. This is why we all have to make special duʿā’, give in charity, and be particular about good actions. There is also a need to pay special attention to reading the *qunūt-e-nāzilah*. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* says further:

Muslims are suffering everywhere. Neither is their wealth, honour, dignity nor their life safe. Even their masājid are being desecrated. People are speaking out

against their pious predecessors. They are seeing their own humiliation and degradation daily. They are also crying out and screaming out of pain. But it is most unfortunate that they are not focussing on the causes of their destruction. They are not searching for the correct path from the Qur'ān – Allāh's Book – which is in their homes and which is a guide for eternity. If the Muslims study the Qur'ān and compare their condition with the reasons for the destruction of past nations, they will realize that their condition is the same as that of nations of the past.

Note: We have to read the prescribed morning and evening du'ā's with full sincerity. For example:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَا يَضُرُّ مَعَ اسْمِهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ

On one special occasion, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* emphasised reading the du'ā' of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *'alayhis salām* and the following du'ā':

رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ

O our Lord! Make us not a trial for the unbelievers. And forgive us, O our Lord! You alone are mighty, wise.[1]

In fact, he used to emphasise this in every assembly.

At this point I would like to take the good fortune of quoting the following couplets of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh*:

> Become a cloud of mercy and pervade the entire world. This world is burning, rain

[1] Sūrah al-Mumtahinah, 60: 4-5.

> down on it and extinguish its fire. Display the character of the Prophet and embrace strangers as well.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise on the teachings of the saints. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1438 A.H.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* translation of this book to this chapter was completed on 21 Dhū al-Hijjah 1439 A.H./02 September 2018. We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter. Āmīn.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

Was salām
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